

# MILITARY

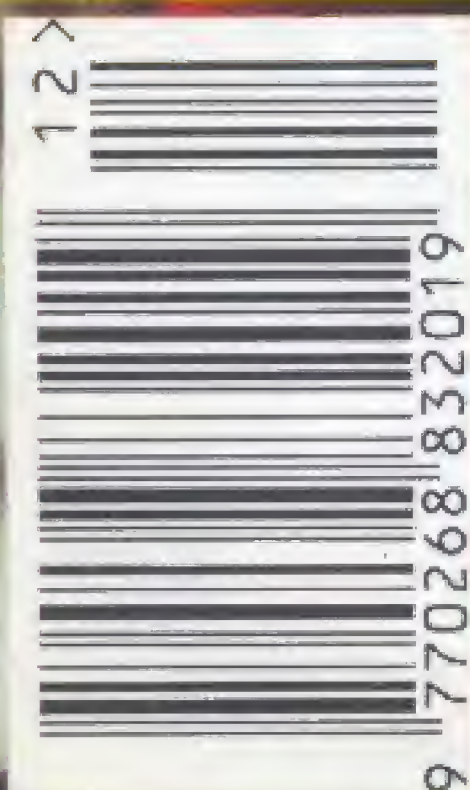
ILLUSTRATED

PAST & PRESENT

No. 67

DECEMBER 1993

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**LOFTIE'S BRITISH OFFICERS' UNIFORMS  
1795-1814**  
**THE GERMAN WAR IN YUGOSLAVIA  
1941-45**  
**HIGHLAND REGIMENTS  
IN THE 18TH CENTURY**

**EGYPT 1882: THE BATTLE OF  
TEL-EL-KEBIR**  
**DIGENES AKRITAS AND THE  
ARMIES OF THE AKRITOI**  
**BRITISH MILITARY BODY  
ARMOUR 1915-45**



# MILITARY ILLUSTRATED

□ PAST & PRESENT □

No. 67

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Our front cover illustration shows a reconstructed officer of the 42nd Royal Highland Regiment circa 1760, see article on page 15. (Neil Leonard)

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I AM AN occasional reader of your magazine and I was interested to see that your October issue contained an article about the Croatian Military Frontier. It is, by and large, an unexplored area of history in this country and there are few reference works in English on the subject. An article in 'MI', evidently co-written by a Yugoslav, augured well.

It was unfortunate that, in the main, the authors eschewed fact and historical analysis for generalised anecdote. Moreover, the arrangement of the article was so fragmented and the plates captioned so vaguely that, given the rambling and verbose English of what I assume was a translation, it was difficult for a student to extract any hard information at all.

What made this offering worse was the clumsy nationalist bias of the piece with its disingenuous references to the role of Serb settlers on the Military Frontier, the extent of their contribution to the units raised in the region and their function as 'partisan' (ie anti-catholic) tools of Hapsburg machinations against Croatian self-determination.

I have no more sympathy for Serb nationalist myths than for Croat ones but the sources I have read\* suggest that Serb settlers provided a significant, if not major, proportion of the Border troops serving in the Hapsburg wars on the Military Frontier and elsewhere in Europe. If this is a fallacy that the authors wish to challenge, I suggest they argue their thesis openly and present the data for us to read.

**J.P. Fortune**

\*GE Rothenburg, *The Austrian Military Border in Croatia 1522-1747* (Urbana, Illinois, 1960)  
The Military Border in Croatia 1747-1881 (Chicago, 1966)

## 'MI' CRIMEWATCH

IN AN ATTEMPT to assist the police in the recovery of stolen items of arms (in particular), armour and other military items, we are this month launching our first 'Crimewatch' aimed particularly at dealers and collectors who may be offered attractive items at lower than normal prices.

Our first request comes from the Suffolk Constabulary who report the loss from a house in Eye, Suffolk, of the following valuable shotguns.

Purdey 12-bore SxS serial N19220 (No 2 of the pair; No 1 was left behind, see photos).

Beretta 12-bore O/U serial No D74273B (see photos).

Aya 20-bore SxS serial No 204628.

Lancaster 20-bore SxS serial No 8377.

Anschutz No 3 S/B serial No 586900.

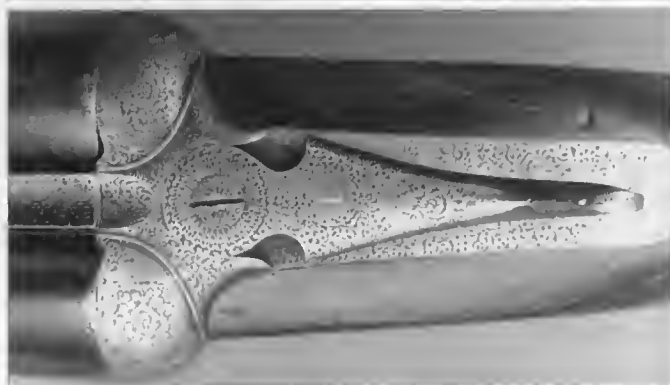
If any reader has any information which might lead to their recovery, can they please contact DC 785 A.K. (Tony) Cole at Suffolk Constabulary Force Headquarters, Martlesham Heath, Ipswich IP5 7QS, tel 0473 611611.

Theft (and smuggling) devalues art objects and apart from being abhorrent in itself forces insurance rates up.

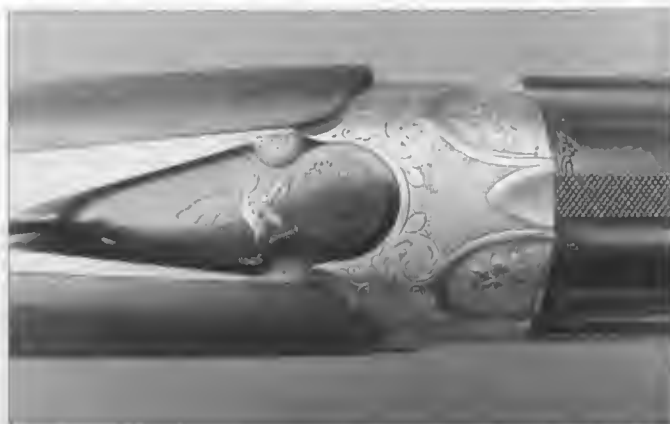
Help us stop it — please. Take this issue of the magazine into your local police station, ask for the Crime Prevention Officer, and get him or her to take down our details.

Reports of thefts — preferably accompanied by photographs — should be addressed to: *MI Crimewatch*, 43 Museum Street, London WC1A 1LY. The details will be published in the first available issue following their receipt (normally within two-three months).

We thank all readers for your co-operation.



**Above:** Two views of the Purdey 12-bore SxS identical apart from serial number to the one stolen. **Below:** Top view of the stolen Beretta.



## IMPORTANT NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

From this issue, please send all contributions (articles, photographs and artwork) to: The Production Department, Military Illustrated, 43 Museum Street, London WC1A 1LY.

Correspondence relating to past, present and future issues should continue to be addressed to: The Editor, Military Illustrated, 36 Cannet Lane, Wellingborough, Northants NN8 4NW. This includes ideas for new articles which should ideally include photocopies of relevant illustrations you would intend including.

For new contributors, articles should not exceed 3,000 words (unless divided into two or more installments) and should be typed with 1½ spacing. Illustrations should be numbered and their captions typed at the end of the article, *not* pasted or clipped to the pictures.

In case of any queries, please telephone Bruce Quarrie on 0933 675669 or Angela Sykes on 071 404 0304.

# THE AUCTION SCENE

SEPTEMBER SAW THE beginning of the new season and in the past there has usually been a flush of early sales. It is an indication of the shrinking arms and armour market in that the number of sales has fallen dramatically. Some ten years ago it was not uncommon for the larger houses to hold perhaps half a dozen sales a year and most would run to several hundred lots. Today three a year is as much as most can manage.

This fall in supply of fresh material was reflected at the London Arms Fair which took place on 24 and 25 September. The general feeling among the exhibitors was that it was now so much harder to find new material. Walking around the tables there were comments that much of the stock had been seen before either at other shows or in the sales rooms.

There are several possible explanations for the dearth of new items

and one undoubtedly is that prices are not at their best and collectors who are not in need of ready cash naturally prefer to hang on, awaiting a rise in demand and high prices. Another is, of course, a corollary and that is that many people do not have the spare cash to increase their collection so the two effects combine to limit the market. However, that is not to say that the market is dead. There was the usual crowd through the door at the Fair with a fairly strong continental and Near Eastern presence and there were one or two big buyers, particularly of cased percussion revolvers. There seemed to be a fair number of items passing out through the door and most of the dealers seemed reasonably happy that the fair had been successful although one or two were a little disappointed. The general feeling might well have been summed up by one who felt that the fact that the fair was still running in these hard times was something to be grateful for. Another effect of the poor cash flow is that the buyers are more discriminating for few can afford to make mistakes whereas in the 'fifties and 'sixties when relative prices were lower a bad buy was unpleasant but was less likely to be catastrophic.

Antique firearms were the most displayed items and there was a

marked dearth of armour with just an odd helmet or breastplate. Some good edged weapons were shown and some good militaria. The fair now hosts three or four specialist booksellers and the price of some out-of-print books on the subject of arms and armour continues to rise, as indeed does the price of new books. Figures £30 to £50 are not at all uncommon for in print publications and for some of the larger, specialist publications the price is likely to be much higher.

The fair always features a number of societies and museums associated with the subject and this is to be encouraged for in them lies the future of the collecting and study of arm and armour. The societies report that membership is, in general, smaller than in the past and this reflects the limited cash available to many.

September saw two sales, one at Philips and one at Kent Sales. The one at Philips did very well and some of the lots exceeded expectations. The star piece was a German Enigma machine which the Germans believed to be totally safe for transmitting their messages but whose code was broken by the Allies — a feat which undoubtedly helped shorten World War II. This was a slightly unusual model and attracted some strong bidding before it sold at £22,000 against

an estimate of £8,000 - £12,000. The swastika also figured on a Japanese Utsubo or arrow quiver which sold for £720 but this had no connection with the Third Reich which had appropriated the symbol which had been used by many earlier cultures.

One feature of the Arms Fair was the number of Imperial German Pickelhaubes being offered and one in Phillips sale realised £140 whilst a fine Victorian Household cavalry officer's helmet, lacking its plume but with chin chain, sold for a good £1,600, well above the estimate. Another officer's helmet of the King's Dragoon Guards complete with plume and lining realised the same price. An English Civil War arquebuser's helmet, lacking its nasal bar, but with its cheek pieces, sold for £580, indicating a continuing interest in this period.

Armour is always popular and a very fine miniature suit, one of a series produced in France late in the last century, realised £1,900, just within its estimate. This example was of a standing figure holding a sword but some were supplied on horseback. The workmanship is of a high standard and the accuracy of the armour indicates that the craftsmen had done their research.

Another highlight of the sale was an engraved powder horn dated 1778. These horns were a feature of the American colonies and commonly are decorated with a map and sometimes a cartouche with the owner's name and details. They have a strong romantic attraction which has meant that they have been well copied. When an undoubtedly genuine one appears the bidding is keen and this one soon exceeded the estimate of £900-£1,200. It finally sold at £7,500 indicating that the market was certain that this was a good one.

In the antique firearms section two flintlock blunderbusses with spring bayonets both exceeded the £1,000 — one by Twigg selling at £1,100 and the other by Lowe at £1,350.

The Kent Sale was described by its hardworking director as satisfactory but even he reported that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find fresh material. Despite this message this sales room still offers the less well-off collector a chance to acquire an object or two at reasonable prices.

The big sales in October will have been the Wallis and Wallis sale with its group of guns from notorious users and the Christie's sale of the Wilfrid Ward collection. Readers of magazines devoting to shooting and firearms will know that Wilfrid Ward was a prominent figure in these fields and his collection contains a number of very fine pieces. Both sales should provide some interesting results.

Frederick Wilkinson

*Two fine Victorian Officer's helmets: Left Household Cavalry but lacking the plume; Right King's Dragoon Guards complete with plume and original silk lining. Both realised £1,600 — an indication of the continuing interest in military head-dress.*





Video releases to buy  
*Rome, Open City* (Connoisseur: PG)

*Paisa* (Connoisseur: PG)

*Germany, Year Zero*

(Connoisseur: PG)

*A Man Escaped* (Artificial Eye: U)

*Battle of Algiers* (Tartan: 18)

THE FIVE FILMS reviewed this month are among the increasing number of foreign film releases on video: each is acknowledged as a classic of world cinema and is presented in its original language versions with subtitles. The first three comprise the 'war trilogy' by celebrated Italian director Roberto Rossellini. Rossellini entered the film industry at the time of the Fascist period and considerable restrictions. His first professional film was to have been a documentary on the work of a hospital ship, but developed into a feature called *The White Ship/La Nave Bianca* (1942). His next two films, *A Pilot Returns/Un Pilota Ritorna* (1942) and *The Man of the Cross/L'Uomo Dello Croce* (1943), also had war themes. By 1944 Rossellini was in Rome, the representative of the Christian Democrats in the film branch of the Committee of National Liberation. A wealthy Roman lady commissioned him to make two documentaries, one about Don Moriosi, a priest and member of the Resistance who was shot by the Germans, and the other about the resistance activities of Rome schoolchildren. As with *La Nave Bianca*, they evolved into a feature called *Rome, Open City/Città Aperta* (1946).

It begins with the Gestapo chief invoking the Schroeder Plan, whereby the city is divided into 14 districts to facilitate mass roundups. He is searching for Resistance leader and Communist Party member Giorgi Manfredi (Marcel Pagliero). Manfredi, who is hiding with Pina (Anna Magnani), escapes the search, but is betrayed by an actress friend. The Germans also arrest Don Pietro (Aldo Fabrizi), a priest who has supplied Manfredi with false documents. Don Pietro is forced to witness Manfredi's torture when he refuses to talk.

Manfredi was based on Celeste Nagaville, a leading Communist in the Resistance. The shortage of film forced Rossellini to buy much of his stock from street photographers; the film was shot silent with sound dubbed on later. Many incidents were based on the wartime experiences of Rossellini and co-scriptwriter Sergio Amidei and were shot at the locations where they actually happened. This location shooting, plus the use of largely non-professional actors, became the hallmarks of a style which became known as neo-realism. The neo-realist approach is even more evident in *Paisa* (1946), a word from southern Italy connoting comradeship and community. In 1945, a demobilised GI, Rod E. Geiger, formed Foreign Film Productions to

## ON THE SCREEN



Jean Martin in 'Battle of Algiers'

distribute *Rome, Open City* in the United States, a print of which he had acquired while serving in Italy. He returned to Italy with film stock and some professional actors. Rossellini augmented these with non-professional Italians, several of whom re-enacted their wartime experiences.

The film consists of six short stories set during the reconquest of Italy by the Allies. The first, set soon after the Allied landings at Salerno, concerns an encounter between a squad of GIs, some Germans, and a Sicilian girl. In Naples, an orphan steals the boots of a negro MP. In Rome, a GI reminisces to a prostitute about a girl he met six months before during the Liberation, not realising she is the same girl. In Florence, an English nurse searches for her fiancée, a Resistance leader. Monks fast for the conversion of a Protestant and Jewish chaplain visiting their monastery in the Romagna. The last story deals with skirmishes between Germans and Resistance fighters supported by OSS personnel in the Po.

By eschewing conventional war-movie heroics and identification figures, and the use of grainy stock, hand-held camera, non-professional actors and real locations, Rossellini achieved a remarkable documentary-like naturalism.

The trilogy was completed by *Germany, Year Zero/Germania, Anno Zero* (1947). It concerns thirteen-year-old Edmund who lives in Berlin with his sick father, sister Eva and Brother Karlheiz. Edmund is not old enough to qualify for a work-permit, Karlheiz is hiding having fought 'to the end', and Eva is on the verge of prostitution. They share a small overcrowded apartment with other families, and sell prized possessions on the black market for basic necessities. Edmund meets his old teacher, a

homosexual Nazi who tells him the weak must die and only the strong will survive. This advice proves to have tragic consequences for Edmund and his family.

Robert Bresson's *A Man Escaped/Un Condamné A Mort S'Est Echappé* (1956) is based on Lieutenant André Devigny's escape from Montluc Fortress in Lyons in 1943, just hours before he was due to be executed by the Nazis. Montluc later housed war criminal Klaus Barbie. Bresson had read Devigny's account of the escape recalling, 'I remember that it affected me as something of great beauty'. Concerning his escape, Devigny had written, 'There were two parts in it, mine and God's. Where was the limit? I did not know but I felt that heaven would cast its glance upon this deaf and resolute struggle only to the extent that I would put the most hidden part of my physical and moral resources into the balance.'

It begins as Lieutenant Fontaine (Francoise Letterier) attempts an escape from the car taking him to Montluc. Once in his cell, he establishes a method of getting messages in and out of the prison. Fontaine devises an ingenious method of escape, a task that will take weeks of painstaking work. When he learns that he is to be shot for spying and sabotage, it becomes a race against time. When he is joined in his cell by a young deserter, he must decide whether to kill or take him with him.

As with most of Bresson's films, this is austere work, filmed almost entirely within the confines of a cell less than two metres wide by three metres long. Sounds assume a greater importance; the noise of trams provide a reminder of life outside the walls, a jailor's keys drawn against bannisters, moans of fellow prisoners, or the ominous

sound of executions. Fontaine comments on his own actions and gives expression to his thoughts, while the use of music is constrained to Mozart's C Minor Mass.

Some of the film was shot in Devigny's actual cell, although a replica was also built in the studio. Devigny acted as technical assistant. The actors were again non-professional, but Letterier was to take up a career as film director.

Gilo Pontecorvo's *Battle of Algiers/La Battaglia di Algeri* (1965) begins in 1957 as French soldiers surround a house in the Casbah in which National Liberation Front (FLN) leader Ali La Pointe (Brahim Haggiag) is hiding behind a wall. It then flashes back to 1954 when Ali first becomes involved in the growing Nationalist movement. In 1956 the FLN initiates a policy of murdering French policemen in order to obtain their weapons. French extremists retaliate by placing a bomb in the Casbah, killing several civilians. Ali prevents a riot by promising the deaths will be avenged: three women working for the FLN place three bombs hidden in baskets in public places, killing numerous whites. In June 1957 Lieutenant-Colonel Philippe Mathieu (Jean Martin) arrives with the paras to combat the terrorism: he sanctions the use of torture. The FLN organises a general strike to demonstrate to the United Nations they have the support of the people. This gives the paras the excuse to evoke Operation *Champagne*: mass roundups and subsequent interrogations reveal the FLN command to consist of four men, including Ali. Three are eliminated: Ali is finally killed when the paras blow up the house in which he is hiding. The destruction of the leadership gives only a temporary respite; in 1960 large-scale riots break out in Algiers. In 1962 Algeria is finally granted independence.

The film was subsidised and supervised by the Algerian authorities, making even more remarkable the fairness with which it views both sides in the conflict. This objectivity is heightened by the use of camerawork which evokes newsreels. Pontecorvo co-wrote the script with Franco Solinas, who wrote the script for *Burn?/Quiemodo!* (1969) about British intervention in the Republic of Ouemada in 1848, and *A Bullet for the General/Quien Sabe?* (1966) (reviewed 'MI' 64). Ali La Pointe was a real character, but Mathieu appears to have been based on Colonel Marcel Bigeard of the 3rd Colonial Parachute Regiment. The events portrayed are undoubtedly typical of those that actually took place. It features an excellent score by Ennio Morricone. Despite the objectivity, the film was banned for several years in France. It won several international awards, including the Golden Lion at the 1966 Venice Film Festival.

Stephen J. Greenhill

# Loftie's British Officers' Uniforms 1795-1814

THE DRESS OF British officers during the Napoleonic wars is well known. They wore bicorns and had long tailed coats up to 1812. Almost invariably, the coat had the collar, cuffs and lapels of the facing colour, the

*6th Regiment of Dragoon Guards, officer, 1801. Watercolour by C.C.P. Lawson after William Loftie. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University.)*

RENE CHARTRAND

WHILE BRITISH MILITARY dress of the Napoleonic period is generally regarded as well-documented, the sketches and watercolours of Major William Loftie illustrate some interesting discrepancies between what should have been worn and what was actually worn.

buttonholes were decorated with gold or silver lace, except in a few regiments which had

plain buttonholes. Breeches were white. Flank companies were allowed caps, of bearskin

for grenadiers and a shako for the light company, whose officers were also allowed short-tailed coatees.

While this was certainly the 'rule', some variations are known. For instance, Captain

*9th Light Dragoons, officer, 1802. Watercolour by C.C.P. Lawson after William Loftie. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University.)*



Elers of the 12th Foot's light company, supplied himself in 1796 with a sabre and reported that 'We wore wings instead of epaulettes, blue pantaloons edged with scarlet, a scarlet waistcoat ornamented with narrow gold lace, and hats covered with the finest black ostrich feathers, with a stand up feather, composed of red and black'. An officer of the 54th Foot, John Norman, recalled that, when he joined his regiment in 1809, the officers wore 'pantaloons and Hessian boots, the pantaloons usually blue, but at the discretion of the Commanding Officer white'. And more such recollections could be added. Many examples were given by Philip Haythornwaite in *Military Illustrated* Nos 2 and 3.

Apart from descriptions from memoirs, there appears to be little in the way of illustrations. Fortunately, there was a British officer who left a substantial pictorial record of the dress of his comrades. He was William Loftie, of Canterbury, Kent. He joined the Army in 1793 with the rank of ensign in the 16th Regiment of Foot, served in the West Indies and, in 1804, was at the capture of Surinam in South America. He became major in the Army in 1813 and was in Paris with the Army of Occupation two years later. He then transferred to the 81st Foot and retired on half-pay soon thereafter. However, he must have missed military life for he soon purchased a commission into the 55th Foot and was with that regiment at the Cape of Good Hope when he passed away in August 1822.

Like many officers, Loftie enjoyed sketching and watercolour. His subjects included the uniforms of fellow officers from various regiments, a topic that obviously interested him especially from 1799 to 1804. A book of his watercolours has survived and is now part of the collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale of France. There are a few foreign uniforms shown but the great majority, 51, are single figures of British officers in uniform.

Loftie drew no less than four figures of his own regiment, the 16th, including a very interesting figure showing the dress worn on campaign at Surinam in 1804. This was not at all the standard bicorn and tailcoat but a very practical dress consisting of a round hat and a single-breasted short-skirted plain jacket. This order of dress had been allowed to officers in the Army during October 1797 but was cancelled in May of the fol-



Major of Brigade, 1801. Watercolour by C.C.P. Lawson after William Loftie. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University.)

lowing year'. In the West Indies, however, it obviously remained popular and is sometimes seen on figures in large prints showing the islands. Inspection reports occasionally also mention such variations in dress, especially the wearing of round hats by officers. Loftie's plate appears to be the best rendition of this peculiar dress on campaign.

Of all the figures illustrated, the light company officers are probably the most surprising for various aspects of their dress, and for their caps in particular. Of those shown, only one has a shako, the regulation headgear prescribed to the light company officers in 1800. Obviously, as Loftie's 1801 watercolours show, it took a year or more for many light company officers to abandon their distinctive regi-

mental caps and adopt the new standard shakos. Grenadier company officers, on the other hand, are usually shown wearing bicorns instead of their bearskin caps, an indication that this type of headgear was not as popular. At first glance, the battalion officers might look the same and be quite 'regulation', but on closer examination, one finds piping, collar tabs, peculiar lace arrangements, coloured gaiter tops and the occasional black feather instead of the regulation white over red. A few even have their blue breeches or pantaloons tucked into boots. Nearly all figures have epaulettes of the button colour, two for field officers and one on the right shoulder for the others. Only the Light Dragoons and the Life Guard have none.



1st Regiment of Foot Guards, officer, 1802. Watercolour by C.C.P. Lawson after William Loftie. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University.)

Some years ago, the late Cecil C.P. Lawson, author and illustrator of the classic *A History of the Uniforms of the British Army*, was commissioned by the late Mrs Anne S.K. Brown to copy the Loftie drawings for her outstanding collection, now housed at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. A few of the more unusual examples are illustrated and a complete description of all British figures is given in this series of articles.

**Description of Loftie's plates**  
'A Major General 1802' — Black bicorn, white over red plume, and gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat, blue facings, gold buttons, gold embroidered buttonholes, white turnbacks. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots.



Black waist sword-belt with gold clasps. Gilt-hilted sword with gilt mounted black leather scabbard.

'Major of Brigade 1801' — Black bicorn, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat, blue collar and cuffs (no lapels), silver buttons, silver embroidered loopings with silver tassels at buttonholes, white turnbacks. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots. Black waist sword-belt with gold clasps. Steel sabre and scabbard.

'Aid[e] de Camp to a General of Foot 1800' — Black bicorn, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat, blue collar and cuffs (no lapels), gold buttons, gold embroidered loopings with gold tassels at buttonholes, white turnbacks. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots. White waist sword-belt with gold clasps. Steel sabre and scabbard.

[6th] 'VIth regiment of Dragoon Guards, or Caribiniers, 1801' - Black shako with silver lace, cords and star badge in front, black turban with silver chains, silver chinstraps. Scarlet coat, white collar, cuffs and turnbacks, silver buttons, lace and wings. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots. White waist sword-belt with silver square plate. Gilt-hilted sword with black and gilt scabbard.

[9th] 'IXth Light Dragoons 1802' — Black shako with silver lace and cords, silver crown with 'IX LD' below, white over red plume. Dark blue jacket with yellow cuffs and collar, silver braid and buttons. Crimson sash. Dark blue breeches. Black boots edged with black lace and tassels. White shoulder belt with black cartridge box. White waist sword belt. Steel sabre and scabbard.

'22nd Light Dragoons 1802' — Black Tarleton cap, leopard skin turban, black visor edged silver, silver band, black bearskin crest, white over red plume. Dark blue jacket with dark blue cuffs and collar, silver braid and buttons. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots edged with silver lace and tassels. Red leather edged gold waist sword belt. Steel sabre and scabbard.

'Royal Artillery 1802' — Black bicorn, white only plume, gold and crimson tassels. Blue coat faced scarlet, gold buttons, no lace, white turnbacks. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots. White shoulder sword-belt with gold oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword. Black scabbard with gold fittings.

'Royal Engineers 1802' —

Black bicorn, white only plume, gold and crimson tassels. Blue coat faced black velvet, gold buttons, no lace, white turnbacks. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots. White shoulder sword-belt with gold oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword. Black scabbard with gold fittings.

'Life Guards 1814' — Probably an officer. Black helmet with gilt fittings, crest red above and blue below, white over red

plume. Scarlet jacket, blue collar, cuffs and turnbacks edged with wide gold lace. White breeches. Black boots. Blue sabretache and schabraque with gold edging and embroidery. Blue valise trimmed with red. Belts covered with gold lace.

'1st Regiment of Foot Guards 1802' — Black bicorn laced with gold, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced blue,

gold buttons equally, gold lace at buttonholes and edging facings and turnbacks, white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Long white gaiters. Black shoes. White shoulder sword-belt with gold oval belt-plate with silver star at centre. Gilt-hilted sword. Black scabbard with gold fittings.

'2nd or Coldstream Regiment of Foot Guards 1802' — Black bicorn laced with gold, white



*22nd Light Dragoons, officer, 1802. Watercolour by C.C.P. Lawson after William Loftie. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University.)*



over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced blue, gold buttons set by two, no gold lace at buttonholes, only edging the facings and turnbacks, white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash.

Royal Artillery, officer, 1802. Watercolour by C.C.P. Lawson after William Loftie. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University.)



White breeches. Black boots. White shoulder sword-belt with gold oval belt-plate with silver star at centre. Gilt-hilted sword. Black scabbard with gold fittings.

'3rd Regiment of Foot Guards 1802' — Black bicorne laced with gold, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced blue, gold buttons set by three, gold lace at buttonholes and edging

facings and turnbacks, white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Long white gaiters. Black shoes. White shoulder sword-belt with gold oval belt-plate with silver star at centre. Gilt-hilted sword. Black scabbard with gold fittings.

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#### Notes

1. Elers quoted in E.A.H. Webb, *History of the 12th (The Suffolk*

*Regiment 1685-1913*, London, Spotswoode, 1914, p394; Norman from *Records of the 54th West Norfolk Regiment*, Roorkee, privately printed, 1881, p45.

2. Public Records Office, War Office 3/31 and 3/18.

To be continued

Royal Engineers, officer, 1802. Watercolour by C.C.P. Lawson after William Loftie. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University.)





# Highland Regiments in the 18th Century

MOST HIGHLAND regiments raised during the 18th century had a brief existence. Generally they were hastily recruited at the outset of each successive crisis and then either just as hastily disbanded or at best re-numbered when peace came. As a result. In the period

STUART REID

DURING THE 18th century, many highland regiments were formed, disbanded and sometimes re-formed. This leads to considerable confusion which can only be eliminated by examining them in chronological fashion.

between 1745 and 1792, there were, amongst others, two 64th, two 71st, two 73rd, two 74th, two 77th and two 78th Highland Regiments — and yet a third 78th raised in 1793.

In order to avoid this confusion, therefore, regiments are identified by the number or designation which they actually bore during a particular conflict. Some units survived to fight in more than one war, with or without an alteration in their designation, but the notes on their services and uniforms are confined to what is actually known to have been worn during the period in question.

By way of a general comment on clothing and equipment it should be noted that until about 1760 highlanders of all ranks wore short single-breasted jackets. These were collar-less in the 1740s but thereafter acquired a small turn-down collar in the regimental facing colour. Officers wore the same jacket, sometimes with lapels, though these may have been confined to field officers. Lapels were more generally worn by officers after 1760 and perhaps by the rank and file as well although evidence is lacking on this. In 1768 both officers and men adopted the same pattern jacket worn by the light companies of line regiments.

Bonnets were invariably knitted and flat in shape until the 1770s when there was a very gradual introduction of the cocked 'Kilmarnock' style bonnet, with a diced band.

Tartans were primarily of the government sett, more commonly known as the Black Watch sett. Some regiments raised in the 1740s and 1750s had quite distinctive tartans but by the 1770s all units appear to have used the government sett as a base and added coloured overstripes by way of distinction.

## THE WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION 1743-1748

**43rd Highland Regiment:** Embodied from Independent Companies as the 43rd Foot in 1739/40. It served in Germany and Flanders in 1743-45, most notably at Fontenoy, before being stationed in southern England during the Jacobite crisis of 1745/6. Afterwards it took part in L'Orient raid, before again serving in Flanders from

*Highland soldier from Grant's 'Highland Military Discipline', 1757. The author, George Grant, had been the Major in command of the Black Watch companies in Scotland during the '45 and was cashiered for his rather too premature surrender of Inverness Castle to the rebels.*







*Light infantry cap, Northern Fencibles. 1780. Documentation relating to the supply of clothing to this home defence unit refers to furred caps being issued to the light infantry. This reconstruction has therefore been based upon a surviving frontlet with the addition of a fur edging of the style contemporarily worn by the light or 'highland' company of the 25th Foot. Other highland light companies may have had similar caps for wear in full dress. Bonnets were worn in the field.*

1747 to 1748. Three additional companies which were recruiting in Scotland in 1745 effectively formed a 2nd Battalion serving there throughout the rebellion and after, until reduced in 1748. The original companies were sent to Ireland in 1749 and re-numbered as the 42nd.

Uniform: Short red jackets and waistcoats. Yellow buff facings. Gold Braid for officers. No ORs' lace shown in 1742 Clothing Book, but the Morier grenadier painting of 1748 or 1749 shows pointed-end loops with a double red line. The tartan was originally an undifferentiated government sett, but a red overstripe was added in 1746 for all companies, probably in order to differentiate them from the highland independent companies raised during the rebellion.

**64th (Loudon's) Highlanders:** Raised in 1745 by John Campbell, Earl of Loudon. Served in Scotland 1745/46 in detached companies — one of which, commanded by Captain Colin Campbell of Ballinmore, fought at Culloden. All of the companies were at last properly embodied in 1747 and sent to

Flanders. There the regiment took part in the unsuccessful defence of Bergen-op-Zoom and was disbanded 1748.

Uniform: Short red jackets, red or tartan waistcoats — two officers' portraits show red tartan ones. White or dove grey facings. Gold braid for officers. Red tartan sett identical to modern Stuart of Bute sett, or at least something very similar indeed. The portraits (Loudon himself and Lieutenant John Reid) show that belts and equipment were buff rather than the black leather normally worn by highland regiments throughout the 18th century.

#### THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR 1756-1763

**42nd Highland Regiment:** Originally embodied in 1739/40 as the 43rd Foot, but renumbered in 1749 and generally referred to thereafter as the 'Old Highland Regiment'. Sent to New York in 1756. Took part in unsuccessful attempt on Louisbourg 1757 and on Ticonderoga 1758. Created 'Royal Highland Regiment' in 1758 and 2nd Battalion authorised at the same time. It served on Martinique and Guadeloupe 1759 before joining 1st Battalion. Both battalions were at the taking of Martinique and the Havannah in 1762, then returned to North America where they fought at Bushy Run. The 2nd Battalion was reduced in 1763 and the

1st returned to Ireland in 1767.

Uniform: Buff facings, changed to dark blue in 1758. The pointed lace loops appear to have been altered to a 'flowerpot' bastion shape circa 1760. Tartan for all companies was the government sett with a red overstripe. Kilts were apparently worn by the 2nd Battalion on Guadeloupe in 1759, but regimental orders also show *mitasses* (indian leggings) and sometimes breeches worn in North America by the 1st Battalion.

**77th (Montgomerie's) Highlanders:** Raised in 1757 as '1st Highland Regiment' and briefly numbered 63rd. Served in North America — in New York and the Carolinas — and at the taking of Martinique and the Havannah in 1762. The Light Company and one other (both left behind in North America) took part in the recapture of St Johns, Newfoundland, in 1762. A contingent also fought at Bushy Run. Disbanded in 1763.

Uniform: Facings may originally have been red but were certainly green by 1761 when described in a local Army List. Silver braid worn by officers, no lace pattern appears to be recorded for ORs. Tartan was also unrecorded but probably the undifferentiated government sett.

**78th (Fraser's) Highlanders:** Raised in Inverness-shire in 1757 as '2nd Highland Regiment' and briefly num-

bered 64th. Served in North America, most notably at the taking of Quebec in 1759, and two companies were also at the recapture of St Johns, Newfoundland. Disbanded in 1763.

Uniform: White or more likely very pale buff facings — not unlike those once worn by the Seaforth Highlanders. A portrait of an unknown officer of the regiment by William Delacour shows unlaced jackets. Tartan appears from this and other paintings to have been an unidentified reddish brown sett, though it is possible that initially at least each company may have had its own sett.

**87th (Keith's) Highlanders:** Raised partially in lowland Aberdeenshire in 1759. Served with some distinction in Germany as part of British Grenadier Brigade, mostly notably at Warburg and Kloster Kamp. Disbanded in 1763.

Uniform: Bright green facings are shown in two portraits — Colonel Keith and Captain John Gorrie. Gold braid for officers arranged in Gorrie's case in alternate pear-shaped and bastion loops; no lace pattern seems to be recorded for ORs. Tartan appears from both portraits to have been the undifferentiated government sett, but with a quite distinct greenish tinge.

**88th (Campbell's) Highlanders:** Raised in 1760 from a nucleus of officers and men drawn from the 87th. Served alongside them in Germany and effectively comprised a second battalion of the 87th. Disbanded in 1763.

Uniform: no details known but facings were probably green as for the 87th and an undifferentiated government sett worn.

**89th (Morris's) Highlanders:** Raised in Aberdeenshire in 1759 with an unusually high proportion (for the time) of lowland Scots recruits. Served in India 1761-1764, most notably at Buxar. Disbanded in 1765.

Uniform: Light yellow facings. Silver braid for officers, no lace pattern recorded for ORs. Tartan was probably the undifferentiated government sett.

**100th (Campbell's) Highlanders:** Embodied in 1761 from various Independent Companies. Initially sent to the Channel Islands but later took part in the capture of Martinique in 1762. Disbanded in 1763.

Uniform: no details are known although the facings were probably the yellow ones customarily allocated to Argyllshire units.

*Belly-box flap: The Royal cypher G2R on this example has been embossed with gold leaf, rather than using a cast metal badge.*





Officer and sergeant; engraving after Van Gucht for Grose's *Military Antiquities*. The belted plaids are competently depicted and the print usefully shows a number of interesting features, including the officer's carrying a firelock in place of the half-pike prescribed for line officers. There is no evidence that highland officers carried pikes. The rather heavily armed sergeant carries a substantial looking halberd but once again it is more likely that they carried firelocks on active service.

**101st (Johnstone's) Highlanders:** Embodied in 1761 from Independent Companies (mainly raised in Perthshire). Originally intended for service in Germany, but in the end it effectively acted as a depot battalion, supplying drafts for the 87th and 88th Highlanders. Disbanded in 1763.

Uniform: pale yellowish buff facings, otherwise no details are known.

**105th (Queen's) Highlanders:** Two battalions raised in 1761. Served in Ireland until disbanded in 1763.

Uniform: Sky-blue facings. Gold braid for officers, no lace pattern recorded for ORs. Tartan as shown in the striking portrait of Lieutenant-Colonel William Gordon of Fyvie, appears to have been an unidentified blue and red sett.

**114th (Maclean's or Royal Highland Volunteers):** Letters of service for this unit were granted in October 1761 and it seems to have been intended for service in North America, but only six companies had been raised by the end of the war and it saw no service before being disbanded.

Uniform: Dark blue facings? Silver braid for officers. Tartan was probably the undifferenced government sett.

## THE AMERICAN WAR 1775-1783

**1/42nd Royal Highland Regiment:** Sent to North America in 1776; fought at Long Island (temporarily reorganised into two battalions) and in the Jerseys, at Brandywine, Paoli's Tavern, Germantown (Light Company only) Billingsport, White Marsh and Monmouth. Thereafter in New York garrison, except for taking part in the capture of Charleston in 1780. The Light Company, however, served at Yorktown in the composite Light Infantry battalion — a sergeant and five men are returned as having been killed there. Subsequently served in



Canada 1783-1789.

**2/42nd Royal Highland Regiment:** Raised in 1780 and sent to India in the following year. Served in the south against Haider Ali and his son, Tippoo Sahib, most notably in the defence of Mangalore. Became 73rd Highlanders in 1786.

Uniform (both battalions): Dark blue facings. Gold braid for officers arranged in square-end loops. There is a reference to a Sergeant McPherson wearing silver braid. ORs had white lace, with a single red line on the outside, arranged in 'flowerpot' bastion loops — these were changed to 'Jews Harp' bastions by 1792. Stewart of Garth, who joined the regiment in 1787, states quite categori-

cally that the plaids were at this time made from the undifferenced government sett, while the same sett with the red over-stripe was used for kilts. White trousers or pantaloons were worn by both battalions on active service — officers in white breeches and stockings.

**71st (Fraser's) Highlanders:** Two battalions were raised in 1775 and hastily sent to North America in the following year; fought at Long Island (temporarily reorganised into three battalions), Brandywine, Billingsport, Savannah, Augusta, Savannah (again), Charleston, Camden, Cowpens, Guilford Courthouse, Green Spring and Yorktown. A detachment was still in Charleston at the end of the

war. Disbanded in 1783.

Uniform: White facings. Silver braid for officers, and white lace with a red worm for ORs, arranged in paired square-end loops. Tartan was the undifferenced government sett. Plain blue bonnets were originally specified and supplied, but a portrait of Major Duncan McPherson of Cluny (1st Battalion) shows a Kilmarnock bonnet. According to Stewart of Garth the regiment adopted a red hackle in about 1777. A silver cap-badge was worn on the cockade by officers.

**1/73rd (Lord McLeod's) Highlanders:** Raised in 1777 (840 highlanders, 236 lowland Scots and 34 English and Irish). Initially it served in the garrison of Jersey but was sent to Madras



in 1779, where it served against Haider Ali and his son Tippoo Sahib. Fought at Conjeveram (flank companies only), Porto Novo, Sholungar, Arnee and Cuddalore. Became 71st Highlanders in 1786.

**2/73rd Highlanders:** Raised in 1778 and sent to Gibraltar, remaining there throughout the siege. Disbanded in 1783 and those officers senior to their 1st Battalion counterparts were allowed to go out to India to join that battalion — displacing the junior men.

Uniform: (both battalions): Buff facings. Thin silver braid for officers and white lace with a single red line on the outside set in square end loops for the ORs. Tartan was the government sett with one red and two buff overstripes. White pantaloons were worn in India and an inspection report on the 2nd battalion at Gibraltar after the siege mentions tartan jackets made from old plaids, with white linen trousers.

**74th (Campbell's) Highlanders:** Raised in 1778, half in Argyllshire and half in Glasgow and the lowlands. Sent to Halifax later that year. The Flank companies served in the south, most notably at the siege of Charleston while the Battalion companies took part in the seizure of Penobscot (Maine) and thereafter formed

its garrison. Disbanded in 1783.

Uniform: Bright yellow facings. Thin silver braid for officers set in pairs; ORs had white square-end loops with single red line. Tartan was the undifferenced government sett.

**76th (MacDonald's) Highlanders:** Raised in 1778. Seven companies were comprised of highlanders, mainly from the Western Isles, two of Lowland Scots, and one was Irish. Sent to New York in the summer of 1779. The Flank companies were then detached; the Light company went to 2nd Light Infantry. The Grenadiers remained in New York but the rest of the regiment then served in the south at Petersburg, Green Spring and Yorktown. Disbanded 1784.

Uniform: Deep green facings. Probably gold braid for officers; ORs had white square-end loops with a dark blue line, probably arranged in pairs. Tartan is unrecorded but was most likely the undifferenced government sett.

**77th (Murray's) Highlanders:** Raised in Perthshire in 1778. Served in Ireland until 1783, then sent to Portsmouth with the intention that they should go to India. However, they mutinied and refused to embark, and were consequently disbanded.

Uniform: Red Facings (1778), perhaps green later? Silver braid for officers. Tartan was the government sett with a red overstripe.

**78th (Seaforth's) Highlanders:** Raised in Ross-shire in 1778, but also including some 200 lowland Scots. Intended for service in India but temporarily reinforced garrison of Jersey and took part in defence of that island against the French. Finally embarked for India in 1781 but were attacked by a 'putrid fever' and scurvy, resulting in a long stop-over at St Helena and the loss of some 230 men on the voyage. Fought at Cuddalore and Palacatcherry. Became 72nd Highlanders in 1786.

Uniform: Yellow facings, although a 1778 inspection report describes them as orange. Silver braid for officers, worn in hessian loops according to a watercolour by David Allen. ORs white hessian loops with bluish green line. Tartan was the undifferenced government sett.

**81st (Gordon's) Highlanders:** Raised in Aberdeenshire in 1778 by William Gordon of Fyvie. Served in Ireland until 1783, then sent to Portsmouth with the intention of being shipped to India but after the 77th mutinied they too were disbanded.

*Notes on the colour plates. Photographs by Neil Leonard; Tailoring by Angela Lowes; Bonnet by Kirsty Buckland; Shoes by Sara Juniper; Heroic expressions by author...*

*Officer of the 42nd circa 1760. This officer is in typical working dress with a short, unlaced jacket, white waistcoat, and belted plaid of the undifferenced government sett. Note the large expanse of leg exposed between the hem of the kilt and the top of the hose. This fighting order is based on a portrait of Captain John Campbell of Melfort. Note the absence of a gorget. Regulations stated that it was to be worn on duty but this appears to have been generally interpreted in practice to mean that it should be used to denote the Orderly Dog or Officer of the Day. The use of a buff bayonet frog rather than a black leather one is unexplained, but supported by various contemporary illustrations.*

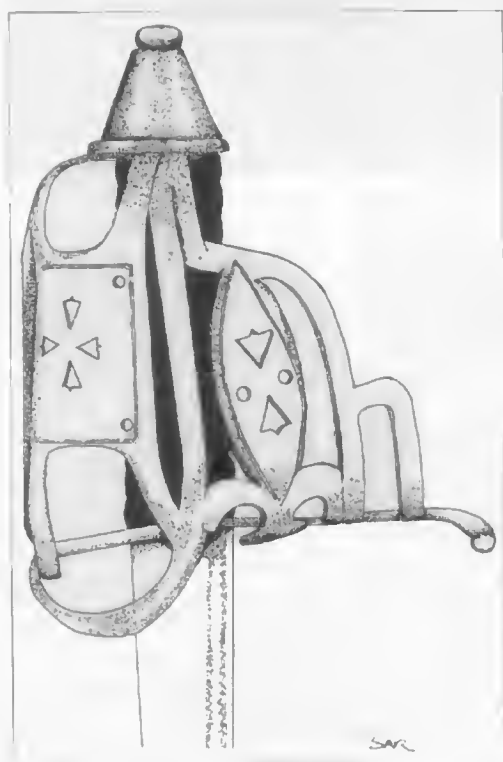
Uniform: White facings. Silver epaulettes and buttons for officers, but no braid. Two portraits survive, one noted by C.C.P. Lawson and another in the Scottish United Services Museum. Tartan was the undifferenced government sett.

**1/84th Royal Highland Emigrants:** Raised in Canada in 1775, initially from amongst former members of the 42nd, 77th and 78th Highlanders who had been discharged there at the end of the Seven Years' War. Remained in Canada throughout the war, serving most notably in the defence of Quebec in 1775/76. Disbanded in 1784.

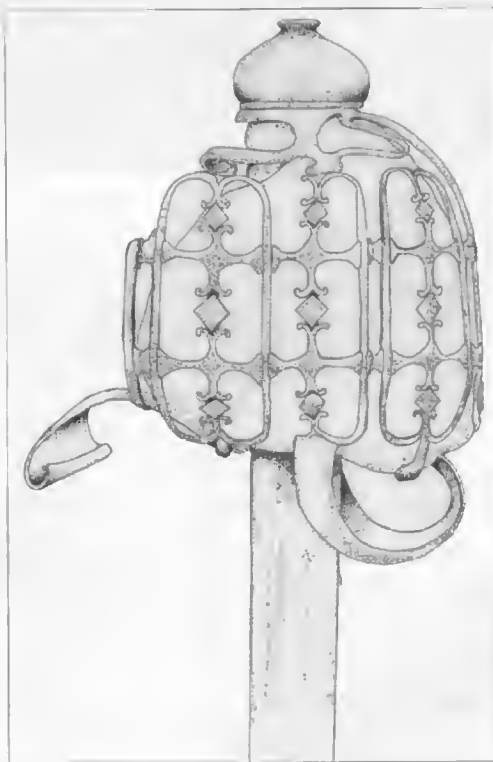
**2/84th Royal Highland Emigrants:** Embodied in Nova Scotia in 1775, partly composed as above but with a substantial number of men recruited in North Carolina. Five companies remained in Nova Scotia throughout the war but the others, including the flank companies, served in the south and fought at Eutaw Springs. Disbanded 1784.

Uniform (both battalions): Blue facings. Gold braid or embroidery for officers. ORs white lace with a blue line between two red ones in square end loops arranged in pairs. Tartan was the government sett with red overstripe. A flat blue bonnet is shown in a Von Germann watercolour but officers' portraits show Kilmarnock bonnets and in at least one case a gill thistle badge worn on the cockade (Major John Small).

*Highland military broadsword hilt. This rather crude iron hilt in the Glasgow style was the standard issue to highland soldiers and NCOs throughout the 18th century.*



*'Military' sword hilt. This distinctive style was apparently quite popular amongst 18th century officers and it can be seen in a number of portraits dating from about 1757 onwards.*









# The Egyptian Campaign, 1882: Tel-el-Kebir

WHILST THE ARMY Corps was consolidating its position at Kassassin, and the supplies and troops necessary for the coming attack were being brought up to the front, General Sir Garnet Wolseley, his Staff and senior commanders had made several personal reconnaissances of the Egyptian defence positions at Tel-el-Kebir. From these observations, it was clear that to ensure complete surprise, a pre-dawn assault would be essential.

This would require an approach march of several miles in darkness, a move that none of the troops had previously experienced, but it was considered to be preferable since, apart from the surprise element that this would give to the final assault, the approach was less likely to be contested during the night and it would also avoid the problems of heat encountered on a march during the day.

On 12 September, Wolseley met his senior commanders at Ninth Hill, an artillery observation post from which the enemy defences were clearly visible, and pointed out to each commander his unit's objectives. To assist units to reach their objectives during the night march, the Royal Engineers, on the

*A contemporary photograph of the Egyptian defences at Tel-el-Kebir. (Regimental Museum, the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.)*



CARLTON WRIGLEY

LAST MONTH WE examined the progress of Sir Garnet Wolseley's expedition up to the battle of Kassassin; here we look at the battle of Tel-el-Kebir which, while a British victory, did not achieve the intended British military withdrawal from Egypt: that would take another 72 years.

night of 12 September, were to erect a number of marker posts and the timing of the march was carefully worked out to ensure arrival at the enemy position shortly before dawn.

The troops that would take part in the attack were ordered to be ready to march from their positions at Kassassin at 17:00 on 12 September. The assault force was to consist of:

**Cavalry Division**, General Drury-Lowe. 1st Brigade, Brigadier Russell: 3 Squadrons, Household Cavalry; 4th Dragoon Guards; 7th Dragoon Guards. 2nd (Indian) Brigade, Brigadier Wilkinson: 2nd Bengal Cavalry; 6th Bengal Cavalry; 13th Bengal Lancers. Divisional Troops: 1 Squadron, 19th Hussars; N Bty, A Bde, and G Bty, B Bde, Royal Horse Artillery; Mounted Infantry.

**Naval Brigade**: Gun crews for the rail mounted naval gun and the Gatling guns.

**Royal Artillery**, Brigadier Goodenough: A, D and H Batteries, 1st Bde Royal Field Artillery; I and N Batteries, 2nd

Bde Royal Field Artillery; C and J Batteries, 3rd Bde Royal Field Artillery. The Ammunition Column was provided by F Bty, 1st Bde, with an escort of one Company of The Royal West Kent Regiment.

**1st Division**, General Willis. Guards Brigade, HRH The Duke of Connaught: 2nd Bn Grenadier Guards; 2nd Bn Coldstream Guards; 1st Bn Scots Guards. 2nd Brigade, Major-General Graham: 2nd Bn Royal Irish Regiment; 1st Bn Royal Irish Fusiliers; 2nd Bn York and Lancaster Regiment; Royal Marine Light Infantry; Half of a Bearer Company.

**2nd Division**, General Hamley: 3rd Brigade, Major-General Alison: 1st Bn Cameron Highlanders; 2nd Bn Highland Light Infantry; 1st Bn The Black Watch; 1st Bn Gordon Highlanders. 4th Brigade, Colonel Ashburnham: 2nd Bn Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry; 2nd Bn King's Royal Rifle Corps; 23 Company, Royal Engineers; Half of a Bearer Company; Royal Marine Artillery.

**Indian Brigade**, General MacPherson. 1st Bn Seaforth Highlanders; 7th Bengal Native Infantry; 20th Punjab Infantry; 29th Baluchistan Infantry; 7th Bty 1st Bde Northern Division, Royal Garrison Artillery (equipped as a Mountain Battery).

The total number of troops involved was: cavalry, 2,785, artillery, 2,492, infantry 12,124, and ancillary troops, making a grand total of just under 18,000 men. The remainder of General Wolseley's command were on line of communications duties or had been left at Alexandria to draw off a proportion of the Egyptian forces from the main attack point.

At 15:00 on 12 September, the troops were informed of the impending attack, when rations and ammunition were drawn and weapons inspected, and by the time ordered, 17:00, the troops were ready to move out. The rear parties struck the tents and these, with the regimental baggage, were loaded onto railway waggons to follow the advance. Each unit had been allocated a bivouac area in the vicinity of Ninth Hill, and as the march began, the night was dark, the moon being obscured by cloud, causing some delay, and it was 23:00 before the whole force was in the bivouac area. When the final approach march began, it was essential that each Division and the Artillery Brigade reached their allotted objectives on time. General Willis and Brigadier Goodenough did not envisage any problems of navigation in the dark, but General Hamley requested the services of a Naval officer from Wolseley's staff to aid his navigation.

The troops were fallen in at 01:00, and half an hour later the order was given for the advance west to commence. Silence on the march was strictly enforced, and to prevent the accidental discharge of a rifle, the practice of one round 'up the spout' was forbidden, the assault would go in with the bayonet. Communication was maintained by communicating

*The armoured train with the 40pdr naval gun and field guns, manned by sailors from HMS Invincible. (Regimental Museum, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.)*



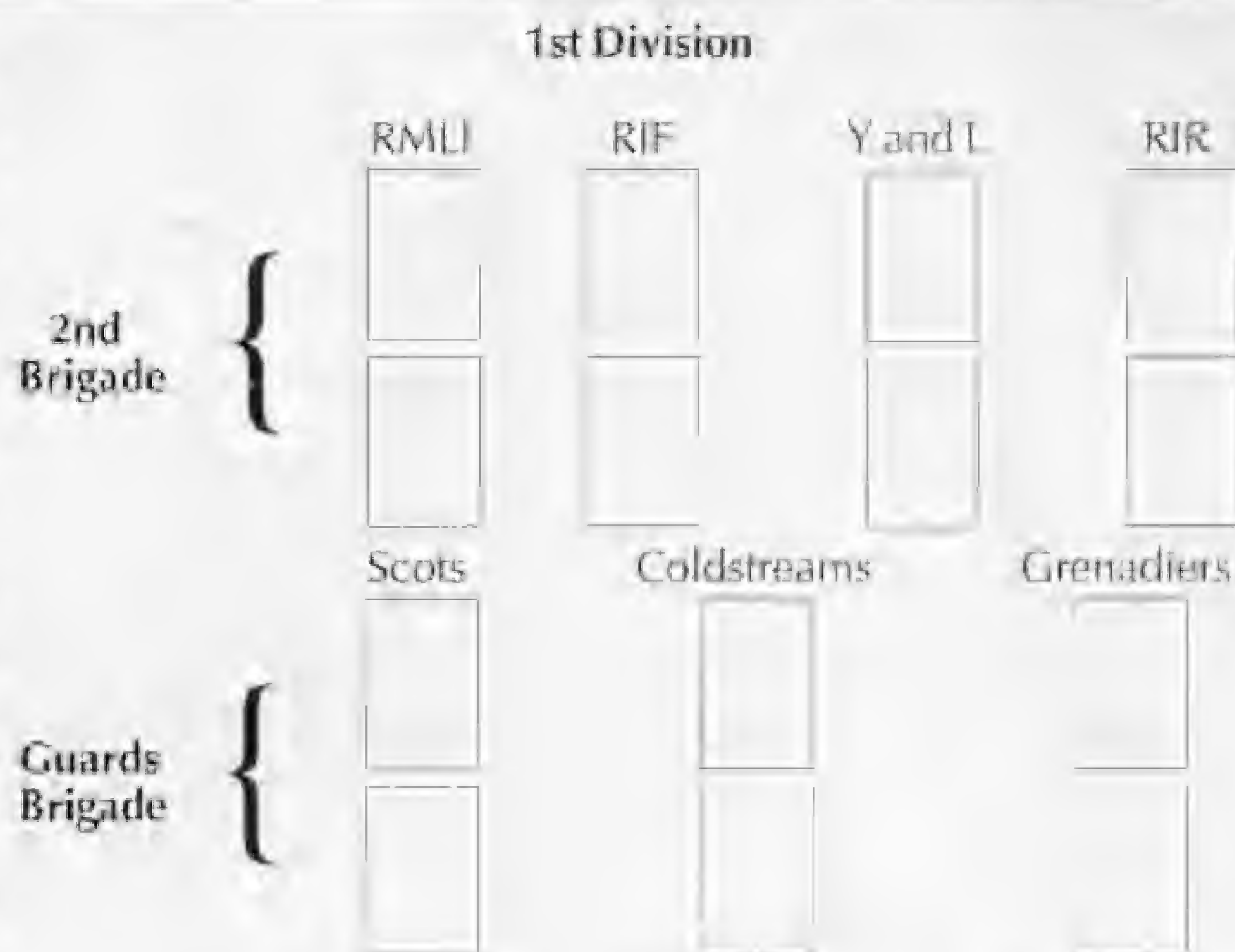
files between Regiments and Brigades.

On the left of the line, the 2nd Division began their approach in the formation in which the Divisional commander intended the assault to be made, the drill formation known as 'half battalion, column of double companies'. The Highland Brigade was in the lead, with The Black Watch on the right, followed in line by the Gordon Highland Light Infantry on the left. The 4th Brigade was in support, with 3rd Bn The King's Royal Rifle Corps on the right and the 2nd Bn The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry on the left. The Royal Marine Artillery detachment was in the rear of 4th Brigade.

support, was deployed with the 2nd Bn Grenadier Guards on the right, followed in line by 2nd Bn Coldstream Guards with 1st Bn Scots Guards on the left. General Willis had decided that the approach march would be more easily controlled with the Division in column of half battalions, which would require re-deploying into line for the final assault.

The 1st Division axis of advance also drifted slightly north during the approach, but in spite of this the defences were reached at the allotted point, near a gap that had been observed in the fortifications during the Egyptian retreat on 9 September.

The Cavalry Division moved out of the bivouac area after the



in support. The 7th Bengal Infantry formed the centre of the line, with the 20th Punjab Infantry on their left. The 29th Baluchistan Infantry were in reserve. The Naval Brigade were on the north bank of the Canal, with the 40pdr naval gun operating on the railway. The Royal Engineers Pontoon Company had the responsibility for maintaining communications between General MacPherson and the Naval Brigade.

The approach march of the assault force passed without major incident, although some problem was encountered by the 1st Division when they had to deploy into line for the attack. Due to the general drift to the north, the troops were slightly echeloned back from the left in relation to the enemy line, which brought 2nd Division into action 15 minutes before 1st Division. The drift was propitious for 2nd Division, however, since an advanced enemy redoubt was avoided which, if they had come into contact, would have lost the element of surprise for the attack. General Wolseley was up with 2nd Division, and at 04:50, unaware that 1st Division were echeloned back, he ordered the Highland Brigade forward to the attack. The leading troops of the Brigade were only 150 yards from the enemy fortifications when the Egyptian sentries raised the alarm, firing wildly at the advancing infantry just visible in the dawn light. The Highland regiments fixed bayonets on the march, and as their buglers sounded the attack, the advance gained momentum. This was one of the rare occasions when Highland Regiments went into action to the sound of bugles, but as a precaution against breaking the silent approach, their pipers had been forbidden to inflate

their pipes. The pipers did strike up as soon as the leading troops entered the defences.

After the alarm was raised, the Egyptians quickly got the guns which were in the prepared positions into action. However, their gunners appeared to be firing on pre-arranged bearings and ranges and, as a result, on 2nd Division's front, most of the shots passed over the heads of the advancing troops. On 1st Division's front, the enemy gunfire was more effective, due to the leading troops being several hundred yards further back than 2nd Division. The Highland Brigade reached the defences first and, leaping into

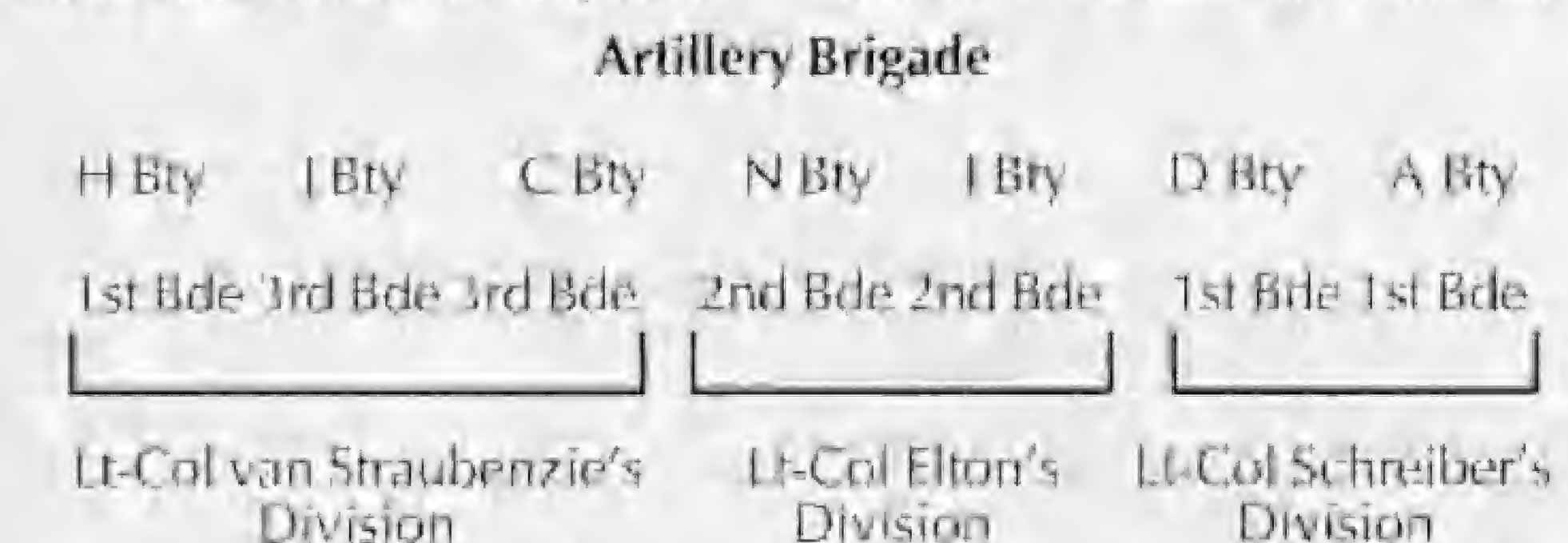


The brigaded Field Artillery was on the right of 2 Division, occupying a considerable frontage with 42 field guns moving in line. The deployment of artillery as a Brigade, which consisted of all the Corps and Divisional Field Artillery, was a new concept for the British army, but a format used successfully by the Prussian Army during the Franco-Prussian War. Brigadier Goodenough had sub-divided the Brigade into three divisions.

During the move forward, the axis of advance of the Brigade drifted slightly to the north, but this was corrected to bring the guns onto their objectives. The diagram below illustrates the formation adopted.

infantry and artillery had commenced their march. The Indian Cavalry Brigade was in the lead, and the line of march was on a previously determined compass bearing to bring them onto the far right flank of the defences. Halting at 03:10, the Division was deployed with the front facing west. The orders were to remain halted until sounds of firing signalled the infantry assault, when the cavalry were to move forward.

The Indian Infantry Brigade's departure from their bivouac area was timed to start one hour after the main body. The Brigade orders were to outflank the right of the Egyptian defences and to prevent any



To the right of the Artillery Brigade was the 2nd Division. 2nd Brigade was in the lead, with 1st Bn Royal Irish Regt on the right, followed in line by 2nd Bn York and Lancaster Regt, 1st Bn Royal Irish Fusiliers, with the Royal Marine Light Infantry on the left. The Guards Brigade, in

withdrawal by the enemy to the south. Moving along the south bank of the Sweetwater Canal, the 6th Bengal Cavalry were in the lead as a screen for the infantry. The right of the Brigade line was formed by the Seaforth Highlanders with 7 Bty, 1 Bde, Royal Garrison Artillery, the Mountain Battery,

*Trumpet used by Major Dent's trumpeter during the campaign. The keys to the citadel of Cairo are in the background. (The Royal Dragoon Guards, York Military Museum.)*







*The Storming of Tel-el-Kebir, morning, 13 September 1882. Painting by Alphonse Marie de Neuville. (The Black Watch.)*





*A group of Gordon Highlanders with the regimental mascot 'Juno' who accompanied them on the campaign and is wearing the Egyptian Medal with Tel-el-Kebir Bar. (Gordon Highlanders.)*

the ditch, they had a struggle to maintain their footing as they clambered up the soft sand which formed the parapet of the enemy fortifications. As they reached the top of the parapet they jumped into the trenches and were engaged in fierce hand to hand fighting. The enemy resisted stubbornly, and the first wave of Gordons and Camerons was forced back to the parapet. There they re-grouped and, being joined by their support companies, led by General Hamley, their second onslaught completely cleared the enemy from the outer defences.

The Highland Light Infantry, on the Brigade's left, were confronted by a particularly strong section of the defences, the parapet was more than 6 feet high and protected by a wide and steep-sided ditch. The defenders on this sector were a Nabian regiment from the Sudan, who proved to be excellent troops, and they had the benefit of support from the guns in the southern redoubt. In the face of this opposition, the Highland Light Infantry were

temporarily driven back from the parapet. The Black Watch, on the right of the Brigade front, were similarly held up at the enemy parapet. Thus at 05:20 the Camerons and Gordons were in possession of the enemy front line defences, and the two flank battalions held at the enemy front line. As the Gordons and Camerons moved forward again they came under heavy cross fire from each flank.

Farther north, 2nd Brigade, leading the 1st Division, reached the enemy front line when the Gordons and Camerons had already taken their sector of the enemy front line defences. The Brigade's first assault achieved all its objectives. The Royal Irish Regiment and the York and Lancaster Regiment stormed and captured the Egyptian redoubt on their front, together with the adjacent front line defences. On the Brigade's left, the Royal Marine Light Infantry and the Royal Irish Fusiliers captured the enemy defences to the south of the northern redoubt. Although the Egyptians on the northern sector did not put up as strong a resistance as their colleagues in the south, they did succeed in pulling back to their reserve positions a few hundred yards to the rear.

In the centre, the Corps Artillery had halted at 04:50, when the batteries were re-

aligned and, as the light improved, the combined artillery moved forward towards the enemy defences, in echelon of batteries from the centre, coming into action at around 05:00. N Bty, 2 Bde, succeeded in crossing the defensive ditch and passing through the gap in the enemy defences below the southerly of the two central redoubts, which had been stormed and taken by the Black Watch and the King's Royal Rifle Corps of 4 Brigade. As the Battery was crossing the ditch, one of the guns came to grief with a broken wheel (hence the Battery's nickname 'The Broken Wheel Battery'), but the remaining five guns were brought into action inside the Egyptian defences. D and A Batteries of 1st Brigade, RFA, came into action outside the enemy defences, giving close covering fire to 2 Brigade, and as the Brigade broke through the outer defences, the two batteries moved their fire to the enemy second line. This combined infantry and artillery assault, together with the cavalry action on the flank, ensured that all

*Contemporary photograph of a group of 2nd Bn, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry Sergeants taken after the campaign. (Regimental Museum, The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.)*



resistance from the Egyptians in the northern sector ended shortly after 05:30.

As dawn broke, the commander of the Cavalry Division had realised that the cavalry were further from the enemy position than anticipated, and consequently a move forward was ordered at 04:40. At 05:00 the cavalry came under fire from the guns in the redoubt at the extreme north of the Egyptian position. The two Horse Artillery batteries, G Bty, B Bde, and N Bty, A Bde, galloped ahead, coming into action in the open ground to the rear of the defence line. Switching target, the two Horse Artillery batteries quickly forced the Egyptian field battery to retire. With the enemy artillery fire silenced, the Cavalry Division was able to penetrate the rear of the Egyptian northern defences, whilst G Bty, B Bde, RHA, managed to cross the enemy fortifications south of the northern redoubt, to give supporting fire to the cavalry. As resistance collapsed, the cavalry charged through the escaping enemy infantry, and headed for the Canal bridge at Tel-el-Kebir. When the enemy defences were cleared, the 1st Division wheeled left towards Tel-el-Kebir, clearing isolated pockets of enemy resistance as they advanced.

Meanwhile, in the south, the Highland Light Infantry and the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry of 4 Brigade had carried the southern redoubt, whilst the Black Watch and the King's Royal Rifle Corps had captured the southerly of the two central redoubts, and with these enemy guns silenced, 2nd Division was able to move against the Egyptian second line of defence. The Division was supported by the effective fire from N Bty, 2 Bde, RFA, and Colonel von Straubenzie's Division of the Field Artillery which had progressed along the enemy line by half batteries, coming into action as worthwhile targets presented themselves. As resistance collapsed, the artillery fire was concentrated on Tel-el-Kebir station to prevent any attempt by the Egyptians to escape by train. By 06:00 all enemy resistance on 2nd Division's front had ceased.

The advance of the Indian Brigade along the south bank of the Sweetwater Canal, and the Naval Brigade operating along the line of the railway, was timed to commence an hour after the main force, but with the defenders alerted by the Highland Brigade's attack, MacPherson's Brigade soon

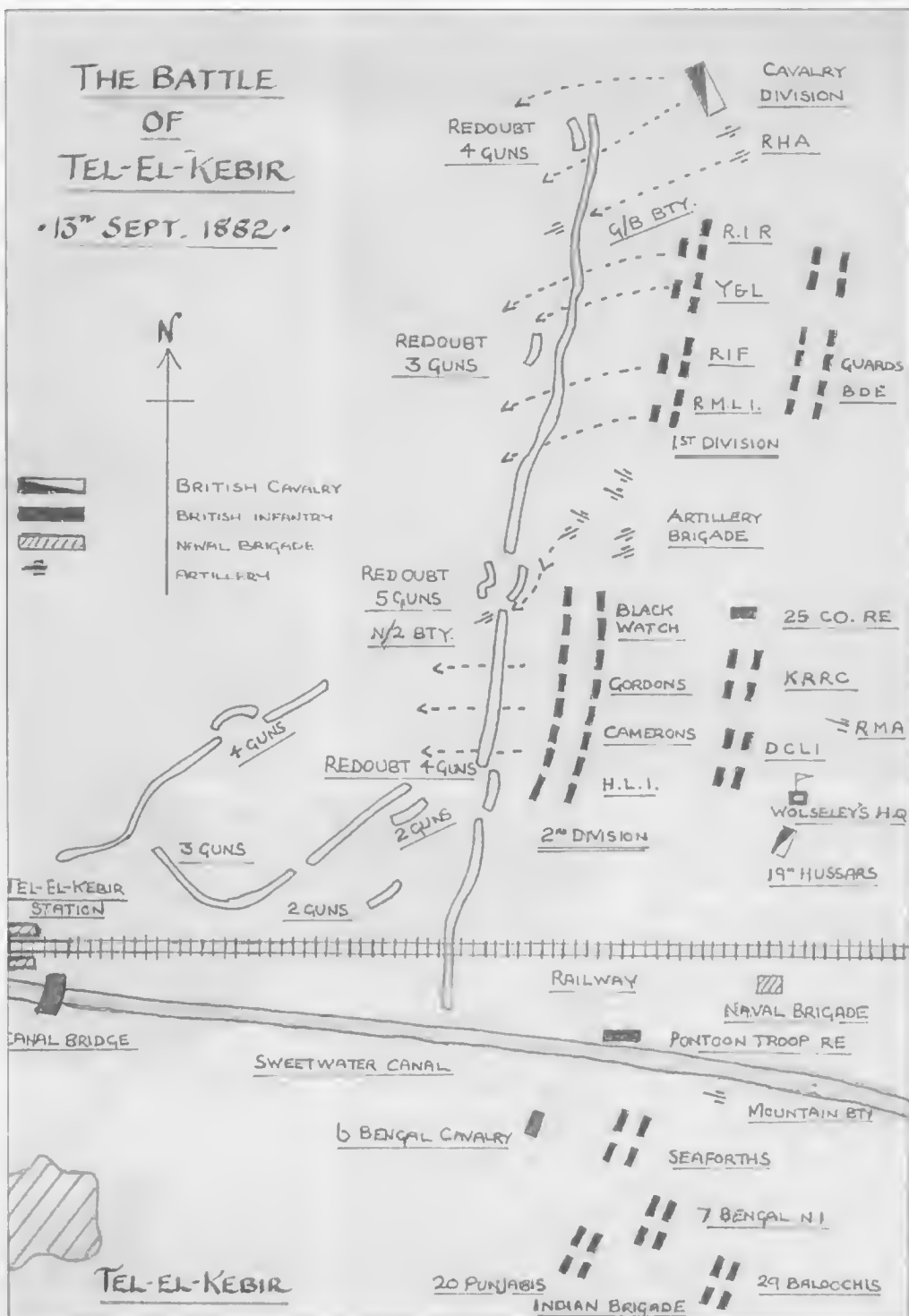
came under heavy artillery fire from the guns in the south facing defences. These were engaged by the Mountain Battery (7 Bty, 1 Bde, RGA) and the Gatling guns of the Naval Brigade; and under this covering fire, the Seaforth Highlanders stormed the defences, completely routing the enemy who were closely pursued by the 6th Bengal Cavalry. By 06:00 all resistance on this front had ceased.

It was known that a considerable number of enemy reserve troops were encamped to the rear of the defence line, and contingency plans had been made to re-group General Alison's Highland Brigade and General Graham's 2nd Brigade, for an attack on them. However, as the British troops approached, the enemy had more obvious interest in departure from the scene than defence...

Throughout the action, General Wolseley had been close up with the advanced troops of 1st Division, and he reached the Canal bridge at Tel-el-Kebir, the pre-arranged rendezvous point for the senior officers, shortly after the leading troops of the Highland Brigade. After receiving reports of the action from the formation commanders, Wolseley issued the orders for the occupation of Cairo and the neutralisation of all the remaining Egyptian garrisons. The Royal Engineers had established the telegraph link to Tel-el-Kebir, and Wolseley was able to have his preliminary report transmitted, direct from his temporary Headquarters in the railway coach used by Arabi, to the Queen at Balmoral. The report was sent at 08:30 and at 09:15 the Queen's reply was received at Tel-el-Kebir. The battle had gone much as General Wolseley had planned. An assault force of 2,785 cavalry, 2,492 artillery and 12,124 infantry, with 61 field guns and 6 Gatling guns, had attacked and taken a four-mile-long enemy defence line containing 75 artillery pieces. British casualties were comparatively light, 54 killed and 342 wounded.

In view of the urgent need to occupy Cairo, the Cavalry Division was ordered to move on to the city 'with all speed'.

Leaving Tel-el-Kebir shortly after 07:00 and moving in two separate Brigade columns, Balbeis was occupied by noon on 13 September. Here it was discovered that Arabi was making efforts to reinforce the Cairo garrison and, holding the Cavalry Division outside Cairo, Drury-Lowe sent Colonel



Stewart with a detachment of 4th Dragoon Guards into the city to assess the situation. Reaching the barracks at Abbassieh at 16:15, Stewart found the Egyptian troops there only too ready to surrender and to swear loyalty to the Khedive. As a result of Colonel Stewart's contact with the civil and military authorities in Cairo, his small force occupied the Citadel, the garrison surrendering and the keys being handed over. With the arrival of the main Cavalry group, the remaining 10,000 Egyptian troops in Cairo were disarmed, and at 22:15 on 15 September, Arabi himself surrendered. Whilst the

occupation of Cairo was proceeding, the Infantry Brigades were deployed against the remaining Egyptian garrisons in the country. Eventually these all surrendered without serious opposition.

General Wolseley arrived in Cairo during the morning of 15 September, and found the city peaceful, with the civilian police still on duty. The Khedive put the Abdin Palace at Wolseley's disposal, and by 17 September, he was able to confirm to the War Office that the war was over.

General Wolseley left Cairo for Britain on 21 October, but 10,000 of the troops were to

remain temporarily in Egypt. Gladstone's government did not intend that British troops should remain in Egypt long term; as Lord Glanville, the British Foreign Secretary said, '... we shall not keep our troops in Egypt any longer than is necessary, but it would be an act of treachery, to ourselves, to Egypt and to Europe if we withdrew them... until there is a reasonable expectation of a stable, a permanent and a beneficial Government being established in Egypt'. In fact, British administrators and troops were to remain in Egypt for many years, the last British troops only leaving in 1954. **MI**



# Digenes Akritas and Armies of the Akritoi

Dr DAVID NICOLLE  
Paintings by RICHARD HOOK

IN THE LEGENDS of Byzantium, the figure of Digenes Akritas stands out as a kind of Robin Hood. Here we examine the arms, dress and accoutrements of the Akritoi which he would have worn.

*Straightway he dismounted,  
loosened his belt,  
Took off his surcoat, for the  
heat was great,  
Fastened his hems up firmly in  
his belt,  
And putting a low cap firmly  
on his head,  
Like lightning he jumped out of  
his cuirass,  
And carried nothing but a simple club,*

DIGENES AKRITAS, the hero of the Byzantine Empire's endless wars in eastern Anatolia, was one of the great mythical warriors of the Middle Ages. His exploits, as recounted in the *Digenes Akritas Epic* poem<sup>1</sup>, have a place in the Greek imagination comparable to that of Robin Hood for the English. Like Robin, Digenes may originally have been a real person — though the reality has long been lost in legend. As an archetypal *akritoi*, or semi-independent frontier warrior, Digenes Akritas was part-bandit, part-professional soldier defending and extending the frontiers of the Byzantine Empire. His name Digenes means 'born of two races' — his father being an Arab Emir and his mother the daughter of a Greek general. Although many of his battles were against Arab and other eastern foes — some of whom were real historical figures — most of his struggles were against bandits who infested the frontier region. In fact in many ways this great epic is a plea for harmony between Christian Byzantines and their Muslim neighbours.

The war-torn world it describes was that of the 9th and 10th centuries, soon to be swept aside by the Turkish Seljuk invasions of the 11th century which overran both Byzantine Anatolia and Arab Syria. Most of Digenes Akritas' incredible adventures were set in an ill-defined frontier zone amid the almost inaccessible mountains of what is now south-eastern Turkey. Most took place in the rugged peaks, precipitous valleys and wind-

swept plateaux of the Toros and Soganli mountains between the ancient cities of Kayseri and Malatya. Kayseri was then called Caesarea and, as the main town of the Charsianon theme or military province, was the most important Byzantine military centre on the eastern frontier. Malatya, the ancient Melitene, had been conquered by the Muslim Arabs in the mid-7th century and thereafter served as one of Islam's main strongholds on this war-torn frontier until it was retaken by the Byzantines in 934 AD. The mountains between these cities might today have been called a 'free-fire zone', not really controlled by either side. Here the warriors and raiders of both Christendom and Islam seem to have had more in common with each other than with their respective masters to east and west. They included Greeks, Armenians, Arabs, Kurds, Turks and others. Though fighting as the champions of rival religions, many transferred easily from one faith to the other — though mostly from Christianity to Islam. Meanwhile this ill-governed but remarkably free

## RIGHT:

*A senior akritoi or Byzantine frontier officer of the mid-10th century (based) on the wall-paintings of Melias the Martyr & another of the Forty Martyrs of Sebestia in the 'Dovecote Church' at Çavusin, circa 963-9 AD, with additional information from an earlier scale cuirass excavated at Kenkol in Central Asia). (Painting by Richard Hook.)*

## BACK COVER:

*John Tzimiskes equipped as a heavily armoured Byzantine eastern frontier soldier of the mid-10th century (based on the wall-paintings of John Tzimiskes and Melias the Martyr in the 'Dovecote Church' at Çavusin, circa 963-9 AD, with additional information from an earlier scale cuirass excavated at Kenkol in Central Asia). (Painting by Richard Hook.)*





region was also home to the strange sect of Paulicians — until they were crushed by the Byzantines in the 9th century. These Paulicians believed in two gods, one good and one evil, who struggled for mastery of the universe.

The existing 12th century versions of the *Digenes Akritas Epic* were probably based on one written by a Greek-speaking monk during the mid-11th century, somewhere in the region once known as Syria-Commagene. Today this comprises the Turkish provinces of Maras, Gaziantep and Adiyaman close to the Syrian frontier. It was an area recently conquered by Byzantium from the Arabs and would as soon be lost again to the Turks. Much of the population, particularly the local military élites, were Armenian. The *Digenes Akritas Epic* also owed a lot to an earlier Muslim epic, the *Sirat Delhemma wa'l Battal*, about a ghazi or Arab frontier warrior named 'Abd Allah al Battal. He was again a real historical figure who lived in the early 8th century.

#### The *Digenes Akritas Epic*

Not surprisingly the *Digenes Akritas Epic* provides fascinating information about the arms, armour, costume, attitudes and military organisation of the Byzantine *akritoi*. But it is also full of obscure terminology, often of Arab origin, which has caused certain modern transla-

tions to be misleading. Digenes' followers are, for example, called *goulabions* which comes from the Arabic word *ghulam* meaning a professional soldier of slave origin. The clothing worn by Digenes includes, at various times, an *epilourikon* or quilted surcoat 'wonderfully sprinkled with gold, violet, white and thick purple, embroidered with griffins', a *phakeolion* turban 'gold embroidered, precious and white' or a *kamelauktion* small cap, probably of fur. His *toubia* leggings or gaiters were also decorated with griffins, as was a gold-embroidered *kabadden* which seems to be a version of the *kabhadion* quilted arming coat worn beneath other forms of armour. In the hottest weather Digenes dons several thin shirts or *mochlobia*. Elsewhere other individuals wear decorated boots. Apart from the quilted soft-armours already mentioned, a warrior could also wear a *periselthion* 'breastplate', in reality probably a lamellar cuirass, or a *lounkion* mail hauberk.

The *arma* or weapons mentioned in the *Digenes Akritas Epic* range from *spathion* and *siphos* swords, *rabdion* mace, *toxion* bow, and *belesion* javelins, to the *bolas*, perhaps sling-shot, *sphendonon* sling and simple *rabdision* staff. The *kontarion* spear was given particular prominence and was sometimes described as being

Wall-painting, Byzantine circa 963-9 AD (in situ 'Dovecote Church', Çavusin, Turkey). The Forty Martyrs wear several different types of cuirass, some of scales and others apparently quilted.

'Arabian', almost certainly indicating that it had a long bamboo haft in the Arab rather than normal wooden Byzantine style. It might also have a *dibbellon* pennon. The poem also mentions a strange weapon known as a *spathorrabdion* or 'sword-mace' — perhaps a short-hafted but long-bladed weapon comparable to some obscure staff-weapons in mediaeval Western Europe. *Skoutarion* and *aspidos* shields, and the smaller *cheirskoutarion* buckler, are only referred to occasionally, as is the *kratema* grip of one such shield.

The hero's riding equipment included *pternioteria* spurs 'decorated with precious stones'. Horse-harness and indeed the hero's horse itself could be magnificently decorated.

A green and rose-pink silk  
was on his croup,  
Covering the saddle to keep  
the dust away,  
The harness was plaited with  
golden decorations,  
And all the handiwork stud-  
ded with pearls,

'Unsaddle this horse and

saddle me the black,  
With double girths and dou-  
bled martingales  
Hang from the saddle my  
fine sword and mace,  
Put on a heavy bit to turn  
him quickly.'

Riding upon a charger white  
as milk,  
Having its mane and tail,  
forelock and ears,  
Dyed red, his four hooves  
also dyed with red,  
Saddle and bridle all picked  
out with gold,

This fashion for staining a horse's mane and tail red with henna seems to have come from the east but would spread widely, later being seen in 17th century Mughul India and in 16th century Hungary.

#### John Tzimiskes & the 'Dovecote Church' at Çavusin

A number of Byzantine wall-paintings, not far away among the rock-cut churches of Cappadocia, can shed further light on the military equipment described in the *Digenes Akritas Epic*. The most important of these is in the so-called 'Dovecote Church' at Çavusin, a few miles from the town of Ürgüp and not so far from the old Byzantine military centre of Kayseri. The paintings which cover its walls and ceiling were made between 963 and 969 AD, perhaps to celebrate the future Emperor John Tzimiskes becoming Domestic of the



Schools and commander-in-chief of the Byzantine armies in Anatolia. The most important of these pictures, from the arms, armour and military equipment point of view, are a row of standing soldiers and two armoured horsemen. The latter portray John Tzimiskes himself and the youngest of the Forty Martyrs of Sebastea named Melito (Melias in Greek). The soldiers on foot are the Forty Martyrs of Sebastea (today Sivas to the north-east of Kayseri). They were a legion of Roman soldiers executed on the orders of Emperor Licinius for refusing to give up their Christian faith in 320 AD.

Most of the soldiers in the Çavusin wall-painting wear various forms of short cuirass similar to those worn by the warrior saints throughout a thousand years of Byzantine art history. Other appear to have padded or quilted defences, perhaps comparable to those mentioned in the *Digenes Akritas Epic*. A simpler form of quilted or padded soft-armour is certainly shown in slightly earlier paintings in the Tokali or 'Buckled' Church at nearby Göreme. However, one of the standing men and both the horsemen wear a very different form of armour. This is a larger cuirass, probably of hardened

leather or perhaps bronze scales, and apparently divided across the abdomen to make it more flexible when riding. Could this be the leather *lorikion alusidoton* or the *klibanion* armour of horn, leather or metallic scales mentioned in several early mediaeval Byzantine sources?<sup>2</sup>

Such armours, sometimes of scale and at others of lamellar construction, are shown in the art of various areas to the east of the Byzantine Empire. They appear in Armenia, Georgia, the Muslim Middle East and Iran, and most obviously in Turkish Central Asia. In fact Russian and other ex-Soviet archaeologists have made hypothetical reconstructions of several such scale and lamellar cuirasses dating from the 5th to 12th centuries.<sup>3</sup> Paradoxically the form of armour worn by *akritoi* frontier warriors like Digenes Akritas, the great Greek hero and defender of the Byzantine Empire, almost certainly originated amongst the Turkish nomads of the Asian steppes!

Other items of weaponry, clothing and horse-harness shown on the Çavusin wall-paintings or described in the *Digenes Akritas Epic* also show strong eastern influence. The two horsemen wear Arab-style

head-cloths, a garment which is also given to some rulers, princes and even saints in early mediaeval Armenian and Georgian art. Their long cavalry spears clearly have bamboo halts which again reflect Arab rather than standard Byzantine, Persian or Turkish practice. This kind of deep round saddle with its supporting cantle and pommel was also used across the Muslim Middle East, parts of Central Asia and even China. Above all the man on foot carries a single-edged though still straight bladed sword with its long hilt lacking a large pommel. This was an early form of sabre known in Byzantium as a *paramerion*. It came into use in the 9th century, clearly as a result of contact with Turkish nomadic enemies or with Middle Eastern troops who had themselves recently adopted the sabre from their Turkish foes. Such a *paramerion* was normally about a metre long and was regarded as a secondary weapon by the military theorists back in

Constantinople (Istanbul) — though not, perhaps, by Byzantine fighting men up on the Anatolian frontier<sup>4</sup>.

All this simply reinforces a view of the land of the *akritoi* and the *ghazis*, high in the Toros and Soganli mountains, as an area where military ideas flowed as easily from one side to the other as did the blood of the epic heroes of Christendom and Islam.

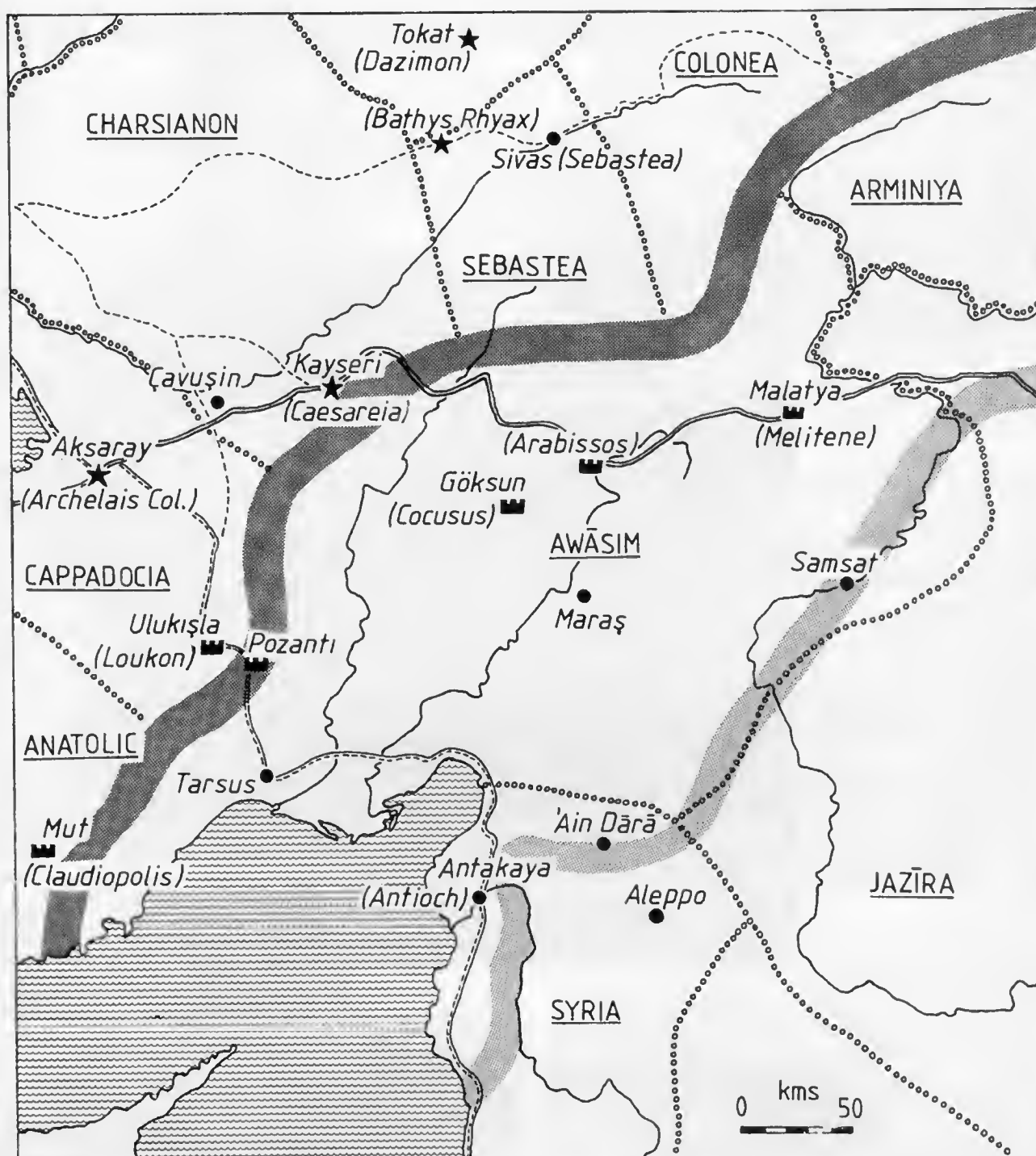
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#### Notes

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4. *Op cit*, Haldon, 'Some Aspects of Byzantine Military Technology,' p31.

Wall-painting, Byzantine circa 963-9 AD (in situ 'Dovecote Church', Çavusin, Turkey). Close-ups of the armour worn by some of the Forty Martyrs.





Frontier c. 900AD

Frontier c.1025AD

"Silk Road"

"Pilgrim Road"

Byzantine military roads

Frontier districts (Byzantine *Theme*, Muslim *Thughūr*)  
names underlined

★ *Aplekta*, Byzantine army  
mustering points

Frontier fortresses



# BRITISH MILITARY BODY ARMOUR, 1915-1945

DAVID J. DeLAURANT

THE MODERN REVIVAL of military body armour started out quite modestly in early 1915 with the issue of some 700,000 steel bowls designed to fit inside the standard French képi. This simple *calotte* or *secrete* demonstrated that lightweight steel plate could be a practical defence against low-velocity shell fragments, and thereby significantly reduce the number and severity of casualties. Tens of millions of steel helmets would be produced during the Great War, plus many thousand defences for other parts of the soldier's body. Thanks largely to the efforts of General August-Louis Adrian, the French Army was first to adopt a modern military helmet, the venerable Casque Adrian M1915. The British were not far behind though, adopting a steel helmet of their own later the same year. Their design was an invention of Londoner John Leopold Brodie, similar to a mediaeval type known as a *chapel de fer* ('iron hat'). The shell of the Brodie left more of the head exposed than the French helmet, but its wide brim — in the manner of a fireman's helmet — gave superior protection against aerial bursts. Its shallowness also greatly simplified manufacture. Unlike the Adrian, the crown of the Brodie Helmet could be stamped in a single operation.

The Brodie Helmet was produced from an excellent material known as Hadfield Steel, an alloy containing 12% manganese formulated by Sir Robert Hadfield of Sheffield. Hadfield Steel can be pressed cold, requires no special heat treatment, and does not shatter when struck. Using Brodie's design, it was possible to make a Hadfield Steel helmet twice as resistant as the French model that could furthermore be manufactured rapidly and cheaply.

Following standardisation and universal issue as Steel Helmet Mark I, complaints began to be voiced against the design. The high centre of gravity resulting from its shallow dome made it unstable and rather uncomfortable; one physician compared wearing the Mk I to balancing a pile of plates on one's head. The usual practice of wearing the 'Tin Hat' tilted to one side hardly improved matters. Another serious problem was the inadequate coverage provided by the Mk I for the base of the skull and temples. A British WWI study of

DESPITE A NUMBER of innovative ideas, many of them impractical in field use and several coming too late to be of use to troops in the field, the British armed forces were still equipped with a wide variety of head and body armours during this period.



British protective mask for tank crewmen. (US National Archives.)

over 300 head wounds indicated that at least 5% had occurred in these unprotected areas. A deeper helmet would have addressed both problems, but this solution ran afoul of the Germans. In 1916 they had introduced the Great War's most protective helmet, the distinctive M1916 *Stahlhelm*. Many commanders feared that a new, more deeply-drawn Allied helmet would be mistaken for the German design at a distance. This concern, on top of the usual difficulties encountered when trying to introduce a new piece of equipment in the middle of a war, caused the idea to be shelved for the duration.

Another idea that ended up on Britain's back shelf — albeit after lengthy trial — was armour for other parts of the body. Throughout the Great

War 'Tommy Atkins' could purchase any of a wide selection of privately-produced 'body shields', with names like Chémico, Berkeley, Wilkinson, Dayfield, Featherweight, Best, BEF, Portobank, Star, Army and Navy, Corelli, Roneo-Miris, Pullman and no doubt others. While the practicality of these defences ranged from reasonably good to downright laughable, the sheer number of competing designs indicates what the demand must have been like.

The British Government's Munitions Inventions Board produced a few items of body armour in addition to the Mk I helmet. In 1915 a protective collar for the neck and shoulders was approved for issue at a rate of 400 per division. Made from layers of silk fabric and floss, this defence was nearly 2" thick and weighed 3.75lb. It gave good protection against fragments but greatly restricted vision and mobility. In addition,

silk proved too expensive and difficult to obtain, and was subject to rapid deterioration in the damp conditions of trench warfare. Few of these defences were encountered after 1916.

1917 saw the introduction of the 'E.O.B.' (Experimental Ordnance Board) armoured corselet, a 9.5 lb defence consisting of three 18-gauge Hadfield Steel plates carried within a padded cloth cover. While reportedly issued in substantial (but unspecified) quantities, the corselet's rigid plates restricted movement to an unacceptable degree for all but the most static duties.

With eye injuries accounting for about 1.5% of all casualties in the Great War, the major belligerents each gave some consideration to protective eyewear or face shields. The British experimented with two quite different types, the most common being one or a pair of steel plates with narrow viewing slits. Called 'splinter goggles' by the leading American body armour authority, Bashford Dean, these defences were an armoured version of the eyewear used by Arctic peoples to prevent snowblindness. When positioned close to the eye, even a slit .02" wide will provide adequate visibility in good light. Privately-purchased splinter goggles were used by Allied soldiers throughout WWI, and survived well into the 1940s for tasks such as mine clearance.

A quite different approach to eye protection became available in 1917, devised by Captain Richard Cruise of the Royal Army Medical Corps. This defence took the form of a chainmail curtain suspended from the front of the Mk I helmet. While seemingly unorthodox, similar chainmail veils were common features of mediaeval Indian and Middle Eastern helmets. Early versions of the 'Cruise Visor' hung by their own weight, which allowed them to dangle loosely (and most annoyingly) in front of the wearer's eyes. This was partly eliminated by the later addition of coil springs at the corners and a folding steel bar at the centre. Soldiers often wore this visor oriented backwards where it wouldn't be a bother, since complaints of headache and dizziness were common following lengthy periods of use. The overall protective merit of this defence was minimal, as it was possible



Front and rear views of MRC body armour



The Mk I helmet. The unusual chinstrap makes this easy to distinguish from the Mk I. Note lack of protection to the temples and base of the skull.

The Mk IV helmet. The more complete coverage of the new shell is apparent.



Despatch rider's helmet.







for the chainmail links themselves to become fragmented and driven into the eyes.

An interesting combination of both types of facial defence was produced for British tank crewmen. A moulded, leather-padded steel plate to protect the eyes and nose was attached to a chainmail veil that covered the lower face. Vision was through five horizontal slits positioned over each eye. Though it gave wearers a decided insect-like appearance, this protective mask appears to have been a fairly popular item.

The pros and cons of the Mk I helmet were reviewed at length during the decades between the World Wars. Rather surprisingly, when an improved Steel Helmet Mark II was finally brought forth in 1936, it turned out to be merely a new liner and chinstrap grafted onto the old Brodie shell. The Mk II liner was more robust and comfortable than its predecessor and simpler to manufacture; by using a bolt instead of a rivet to join it to the shell, the liner could be routinely removed for cleaning or replacement. The unique chinstrap of the Mk II was made

*Mk I helmet, silk necklet and EOB body armour. (From Helmets and Body Armor in Modern Warfare by Bashford Dean, New York, 1977.)*

from cotton webbing with two fabric-encased steel springs at either end.

The adoption of the Mk II was not unanimously applauded by physicians, many of whom pointed to the need for more complete protective coverage. K. Vernon Bailey, MC, MD, MRCP, went so far as to propose an inexpensive method of bending the Mk II's brim downward at the sides and back to make it more suitable. The Medical Research Council (MRC) soon took on the task of designing a new helmet, finalising an improved pattern in 1941. The Mk III helmet, as it would be designated, utilised the same liner as the Mk II, though a simple band of elasticated fabric replaced the Mk II's odd chinstrap assembly. The shell of the new helmet covered about 12% more of the head's surface than the Mk II and, while it was about 4oz heavier, most found it more comfortable to wear because of its lower centre of gravity.

Field trials of the Mk III began in the autumn of 1941. Despite the design's clear superiority, there was still a measure of resistance against any new helmet because of possible recognition errors. This objection was no longer critical, as it had become common practice in most armies to camouflage infantry helmets with cloth covers or foliage; besides which, the Mk III resembled the Mk I/II helmet more than any other type at a distance.

The Mk III became standard issue in late 1943, but production was insufficient for immediate replacement of the Mk II. The assault formations of the 21st Army Group were completely re-equipped with Mk III helmets; otherwise, replacements occurred 'in the normal course of maintenance issues'.

An alternative attachment for the Mk III was devised in 1944 at the request of authorities in the Far East Theatre. The bolt through the apex of the crown was replaced with a 'lift-the-dot' fastener post, which mated to a snap incorporated in the liner. This revision sealed the shell so it could double as a bucket or basin like the US M1 helmet. The improvement was adopted and designated the Mark IV Helmet, displacing the Mk III from production by the end of 1944.

Another 'family' of steel helmets was developed concurrently with the Mk III/IV, the first and best know of which was the Steel Helmet, Pattern for Airborne Troops. This helmet was originally produced with a 'lip' of hard rubber around the rim, which was broader in back than in front. The lip was later replaced with a flat band of hard rubber an inch wide, and finally dispensed with altogether. All three models had a cupped leather chinstrap that attached to the shell with bolts at three points (at the temples and in back) for optimum security and stability during airborne drops. A fabric chinstrap was eventually substituted to save leather. The liner of the Airborne Helmet consisted of a cradle of cotton straps and sponge rubber pads attached to an aluminium band.

Royal Armoured Corps personnel required a more compact steel helmet than the Mk III/IV, and obtained it by combining the shell of the Airborne Helmet with the liner and chinstrap of the Mk III. (The author has also seen example where the Mk II chinstrap was mated to the airborne shell and liner.)

Another helmet was

designed around the airborne shell to provide motorcyclists with both crash and ballistic protection. The Dispatch Riders' Mark I Steel Helmet is easily recognised due to the hood-like extension of the leather liner, which protected the back and sides of the wearer's head against the elements. The leather chinstrap was sewn onto this extension and fastened with a simple buckle. The liner was well-padded with leather-faced sponge rubber, and a cradle of cotton webbing at the crown kept the shell from banging the top of the head. Unlike the Airborne or RAC Helmets, the liner of the Dispatch Rider's Helmet is permanently fixed to the shell with rivets.

Despite problems with his Great War design, Richard Cruise did not abandon his search for a practical visor. His new (1939) defence was designed in partnership with the Fairey Aircraft Company. It was a retractable plate of 22 gauge aluminium that attached to the Mk II helmet, moulded to match the inner contour of the helmet and attached with rivets. A metal clip and an arrangement of springs acted to hold the defence firmly in place when not in use. Most of the shield's surface was perforated with a grid of small holes, allowing a fair measure of visibility. The visor was proof against birdshot at 30 yards, and was initially endorsed by several prominent physicians. A trial batch of 5,000 was produced for troop tests in England in late 1940. An unexpected problem was discovered: in rainy weather the holes quickly filled with water, which ruined visibility and proved difficult to shake clear. The metal visor concept was judged a dead end, and in 1941, after some desultory experimentation with transparent perspex visors, work on armoured visors came to a halt.\*

Investigation into the merits of torso armour was rekindled in early 1940 through the efforts of Kenneth M. Walker, FRCS. Dr Walker spent the last two years of the Great War touring the British Third Army front, where he noted 'the large number of men who died in the trenches as the result of being hit in the front of the chest by tiny fragments of grenades or shell that ripped open some

\*The author has seen photographs of a second type of metal visor associated with the Mk II helmet. This defence has three louvred slots over each eye, and is designed to be easily removed when not in use. Whether this is another Cruise design or the work of another experimenter is not known.

large vessel with rapidly fatal result'. It occurred to him that a steel plate positioned behind the standard anti-gas respirator would protect this vulnerable area, and with provision for attaching a handle the same plate could be made to serve as an entrenching tool. Putting his idea into a memorandum to GHQ, Walker's idea eventually found its way onto the desk of Arthur Asquith, Controller of Trench Warfare Supplies, who brought it to the attention of his chief, Winston Churchill. Walker was recalled from France and offered a position as an expert on light armour, but since the war was nearly over at this point he declined. Walker remained convinced that some form of light body armour would be practical for the modern soldier, and said as much in an open letter to the *British Medical Journal* dated 27 March 1940.

The War Office was unresponsive to his suggestion at first, so Walker placed his case before the Royal Society of Medicine; the MRC formed a Body Protection Committee to investigate the matter at length. The committee first evaluated recent casualty studies to determine the relative lethality of wounds to different areas of the body. It has been observed that modern war wounds are usually distributed throughout the body at random. It therefore follows that the frequency of wounds to a particular region of the body will be in proportion to that region's surface area. This can be approximated as follows: Head and neck, 11%; Torso, 30%; Arms, 23%; and Legs, 36%.

According to five different studies of casualties given medical treatment during the Great War and the early part of WWII, the observed distribution was as follows: Head and neck, 17%; Torso, 7%; Arms, 32%; and Legs, 44%. Remembering that the head was protected by the steel helmet, the disparity of treatable torso wounds was ascribed to their higher and more rapid lethality.

Studies of the causes of battle casualties seldom show close agreement because differences in tactics, weaponry and environment change the proportion of wounds caused by the various weapon types. Nevertheless, the frequency of wounds due to projectiles of low and medium velocity (under 1,500 feet per second) is usually well in excess of 50%, often approaching 75%. The Body Protection Committee therefore estimated that the

incidence of fatal casualties could be reduced from 21% to 7% of total casualties by providing protection comparable to the steel helmet over the vital parts of the trunk. For the Admiralty they added that 'personnel exposed by virtue of their special duties, eg, men serving anti-aircraft guns, bridge and signal staff... could with advantage receive additional protection'. The additional defence they had in mind would 'cover the whole of the chest and abdomen, back and shoulders... designed to keep out bomb and shell splinters, and, so far as is practical machinegun bullets'. Complete with sponge rubber lining and quick-release fasteners, the Committee believed that such a defence would weigh on the order of 18lb.

The Committee's weight limit for lightweight infantry armour was set at 4lb. They considered Walker's respirator plate at first, but soon ruled out the idea due to the differing carry and alert positions for the respirator haversack employed by the three armed services. A more elaborate design was then developed using three plates for the vital areas of the chest, abdomen and lower back. To keep within their weight limit, the surface area of the 1mm-thick Hadfield Steel plates had to remain relatively small: 9" x 8" for the chest, 6" x 8" for the abdomen, and 14" x 9" in an inverted T-shape for the back. The plates were curved slightly to follow body contours, and all corners were carefully rounded to prevent chafing. They were sewn into khaki-coloured cloth covers that attached to each other with a loose arrangement of web straps. To keep the inner surface of the plates from direct contact with the wearer's body, a lining of sponge rubber pads was incorporated. The pads were supposed to allow the free passage of air underneath to avoid the build up of body heat and perspiration. However, when worn under other infantry harness as intended, some additional discomfort from the armour inevitably resulted.

Five thousand sets of the 'MRC Body Armour' were manufactured for evaluation by troops in England and the Middle East during 1941. The sponge rubber pads had to be replaced with felt during production due to rubber shortages. As finalised, the MRC Armour weighed a total of 3.5lb. Early reports were very favourable and approval for introduction into the British Army was given

in April 1942, though a shortage of Hadfield Steel caused a delay in production.

The order for the first 500,000 sets was finally placed in September 1943, to be scaled down to 300,000 in early 1944, and finally stopped after some 200,000 had been manufactured. Half of these went to War Office depots, and of the remainder the RAF received 65,000 sets, the Army 15,000. Most of the latter went to the 21st Army Group and its Airborne Division. About 300 were also requested for personnel of the Royal Engineers in Italy on special duties.

MRC Armour was available to Airborne troops during Operation 'Market-Garden' in 1944. It had first been issued as standard equipment during preparations for an earlier operation. The initial reception was decidedly cool: to quote John Fairley, 'at first glance it seemed much too thin and lightweight to be capable of stopping anything'. Impromptu firing tests demonstrated the armour proof against SMG fire and gained a few converts. During the flight to Arnhem one trooper, when asked if he was wearing his, replied, 'Too true — in fact I've

*An American soldier models a British helmet with commercial splinter goggles and 'BEF' body shield. (US National Archives.)*

got two sets on, one front and one back — I don't want any stray bullets up my arse as we go over'.

Despite the efforts of many knowledgeable people, the MRC Armour programme never really went anywhere. Objections were expressed by some officers about the value of a body defence with so little coverage, and complaints of personal discomfort and reduced mobility had been brought to the fore, but bad timing was probably the main reason for the project's failure. Interest in such a novel design simply could not be sustained during the two-year hiatus between approval and actual availability, leaving ample opportunity for second thoughts. The vests stayed in storage for lack of demand, and the British Army was content to leave them there. **[M]**

#### Acknowledgments and notes

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# The German Struggle Against Tito's Partisans

FIFTY YEARS AGO, as today, a fierce war raged in Bosnia. A war of race, religion and political conviction. It was also a presage of the 'cold war' yet to come.

Yugoslavia was the creation of the victors of the First World War. All the new states brought into being by the Treaty of Versailles had difficult births; none more so than Yugoslavia. From the very start everything went wrong. The new state was an amalgam of the Kingdom of Serbia (which included the

DAVID LITTLEJOHN  
Painting by BRIAN MOLLOY

WHEN GERMANY INVADED Yugoslavia in 1941, the country was effectively plunged into a civil war very similar to the situation we see today, with no holds barred fighting between Croats and Moslems (many of whom enlisted in the SS) and the largely Serbian Partisans. Here we concentrate specifically on the Waffen-SS 'Prinz Eugen' Division.

erstwhile Kingdom of Austro-Hungarian provinces of Montenegro) and the former Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia-

Herzegovina. Unavoidable frontier readjustments resulted in the inclusion within its boundaries of substantial Italian, German, Hungarian and other minorities. This inevitably led to friction between Yugoslavia and its neighbours, but this was not the rock upon which the new state floundered. It was irreconcilable differences as to the nature of its constitution. The Croats and Slovenes envisaged it as a loose federation of equal partners. To the Serbs there

Scharführer



Panzer  
Obersturm-  
führer



Brigade-  
führer



was never any question that the new Yugoslavia would be other than an enlarged Serbia. Serbs and Croats might speak the same language, but beyond that they had little in common. Serbia, Greek Orthodox in religion, used the Cyrillic alphabet, was economically backward and Russophile. Roman Catholic Croatia and Slovenia used the Latin script and, with their Vienna-orientated culture, were thorough westernised. To this problem Bosnia-Herzegovina added its own unique contribution. Although in racial terms entirely European, a large proportion of the populace were Moslem having, centuries before, embraced the faith of their Turkish conquerors.

Serb attempts to coerce the others into acceptance of Serb hegemony inevitably resulted in resentment, resistance and, in extreme cases, terrorism. In January 1929 a Zagreb lawyer, Ante Pavelic, founded the Insurgent Croat Revolutionary Organisation, known by its acronym as the Ustase. It began a sustained campaign of bombing and shooting which culminated in Pavelic being sentenced to death *in absentia*. A lawyer outlawed in his own land, Pavelic fled to Italy where he solicited Mussolini's aid. In the Duce he found a not unsympathetic listener and was granted a subsidy of 25 million Lire to help him establish Ustase training camps in Italy.

When war broke out in September 1939 Italy remained neutral, only joining the conflict the following summer — in time to grasp its share of the spoils resulting from the defeat of France. It had not been Hitler's intention to disturb the peace of the Balkans, but Mussolini's foolhardy attack on Greece in October 1940 obliged him to come to the aid of his Axis partner whose army was, by winter, in dire trouble. Such aid could come most easily via Yugoslavia. A pretext to attack her was provided by the Yugoslavs themselves when they appeared to renege on a recent treaty with Germany (in fact they did *not* breach the treaty but it appeared to the world outside, including Churchill, that they *had* done so and this was sufficient for Hitler). There was no declaration of war. As the first bombs rained down on Belgrade in the early hours of 6 April 1941, the German Twelfth Army under Field Marshal List crossed the frontier from Bulgaria in a strength of 20 divisions (five of

## UNIFORMS OF THE SS DIVISION 'PRINZ EUGEN'

The 'Prinz Eugen' wore three main types of uniform: (a) standard field grey (b) all black Panzer uniform, (c) seasonal camouflage clothing. With these was worn a range of headgear. As a *Gebirgs* (Mountain) Division the wearing of the *Gebirgsmütze* (Mountain cap) was authorised. This soft peaked ski cap was originally worn only by mountain units (of the army or *Waffen SS*), but after 1943 a slightly modified version became the virtually universal headgear of Germany's armed forces. It was then known as the *M.43 Einheitsfeldmütze* (Model 1943 Standard issue field cap). As an alternative to this, a side cap or *Schiffchen* (literally 'little ship') could be worn, either in field grey or, for the Panzer Company, black — in both cases piped in silver for officers. (The black Panzer beret had been discontinued before the 'Prinz Eugen' was formed). A stiffened *Dienstmütze* (Service cap) with field grey top, black band, black leather visor and two twisted silver aluminium chin cords could be worn on formal occasions — but possibly only 'regulars' among the officers of the Division possessed one. More commonly worn was the less formal version without the silver cord chin strap. This, unlike the foregoing, was piped in the *Waffenfarbe* (branch-of-the-service colour).

Officers could wear riding breeches and black top boots, but ski trousers worn with either leather anklets or short thick woollen socks and studded climbing boots were obviously preferred by all ranks when on active duty. The Panzer Company had a rather similar style of trousers in black worn with black anklets and unstudded black boots. Two types of camouflage upper body covering could be worn: (a) a lightweight tunic with collar or (b) a smock without a collar. With (a) it was usual to wear matching camouflage trousers; with (b) normally standard service dress trousers. Camouflage clothes were reversible so that they could be adapted to the seasonal colours.

The 'Prinz Eugen' had its own unique right-hand collar patch (rank being worn on the left). This was an Odalsrune or runic O, said to be symbolic of kinship. It was also used as the divisional emblem (on vehicles, etc) and was featured on some of the insignia of the German *Volksgruppe* in Croatia. On the black collar patch this was in white cotton for non-commissioned grades and in silver bullion for officers, their patch being piped, likewise, in silver. But there was one interesting exception: those who had previously served as officers in the armies of their respective countries of origin (Yugoslavia, Rumania, Hungary, etc) but were not granted commissions in the SS, were allowed to

wear the officers' silver bullion Odalsrune although without the silver piping to the patch. Members of other *Waffen SS* divisions transferred to the 'Prinz Eugen' were required to change their SS runes patch for the Odalsrune. However, their former status was indicated by the wearing on the left breast pocket of SS runes in silver on a black, or field-grey, cloth backing. This practice was authorised by Himmler in July 1943.

An oddity was the wearing of the Odalsrune on both collars. This did happen in at least one case in the 'Prinz Eugen' but was, by this point in time, entirely incorrect. Only between October 1939 and May 1940 was the 'double collar' insignia official. It would appear, however, that even after the cancellation of this order in May 1940, some persons continued to wear the dual patches (this applied equally to the SS runes, the death's head and the Odalsrune — in most cases both sides were the same, but, in rarer instances, the left was the 'mirror image' of the right). *Standartenführer* and above followed the standard SS practice of having rank insignia on both collars.

On his left upper arm, above the SS arm eagle, Phleps wore a silver bullion Odalsrune on a black cloth circle outlined in silver. He was not, as is sometimes claimed, the only person in the division to do so. Photographs show that some other officers did likewise.

On the right upper arm, to denote a mountain unit, an Edelweiss emblem was worn. This was a white cotton or, for officers, silver bullion flower with yellow stamen on a black oval with a white cotton/silver bullion surround. This same Edelweiss with the black cloth backing cut away to conform, roughly, with the shape of the flower was worn on the left side of the *Bergmütze*. It was not worn on the camouflage cap, nor properly was any insignia although, unofficially, an eagle-and-swastika and/or a death's head was sometimes added.

A cloth badge very similar to the Edelweiss arm badge but with the addition of the word *Bergführer* (Mountain Guide) could be worn on the left breast pocket by those so qualified. This was in the customary silver bullion (officers) or white cotton (other ranks) versions. This badge, unique to the SS, was introduced only in October 1944. Prior to that *Waffen SS* mountain guides had worn the enamelled metal army type.

All members of the division could wear on the lower left arm a black cuff title with the words 'Prinz Eugen'. This was in three versions: (a) For officers, name and upper and lower edges in

lower edges in aluminium thread; (c) Other ranks, name and upper and lower edges in machine-woven silver grey thread. In the case of this last type the edges are more deeply inset (ie, there is more black showing above and below).

Just as with the collar patch, former officers not holding SS commissions were permitted to wear the officer-type cuff title.

On 13 November 1944, following the death of Phleps, Regiment 13 was granted the right to wear, in place of the 'Prinz Eugen' cuff title, one in a similar style but with the words 'ARTUR PHLEPS'. When Regiment 14 was given the name 'Skanderberg' (after it had absorbed a number of men from that defunct division) a cuff title with this name *may* have been worn by the Regiment, possibly only by erstwhile members of the 21 SS Division 'Skanderberg' (which certainly possessed such a cuff title). No photographs have come to light showing any member of the 'Prinz Eugen' actually wearing a 'Skanderberg' cuff title.

The Feldgendarmerie Troops, like other sub-units of the Division bore the number 7, which was worn on both shoulder straps. The practice of a Feldgendarmerie unit taking the number of the division to which it was attached was unique to the *Waffen-SS*. In the army Feldgendarmerie numbers bore no relation to those of divisions. As their cuff title most *Waffen-SS* Feldgendarmerie men wore the army type with the word 'Feldgendarmerie' in Gothic script, but later the *Waffen-SS* introduced its own version.

Members of the 'Prinz Eugen', unlike those of their sister Division, the 'Handschar', did not wear the red-and-white chequer board shield of Croatia. However, one photograph does clearly show a 'Prinz Eugen' man wearing this on his left upper arm. It can only be assumed that this was an error on his part!

On the collarless camouflage smock, rank was indicated by 'bars' worn on both sides on the upper arm. Prior to February 1943 these bars indicated only rank-grouping in the following way: one bar: senior NCOs; two bars: junior officers; three bars: senior officers. After this date the army (and *Waffen-SS*) brought in a more elaborate scheme whereby individual rank was denoted. This consisted of light green bars on a black background for NCO grades (five in all), or similar bars below light green oak leaves for lower and middle ranking officers — ditto in gold for senior leaders.

The *Waffen SS* adopted the same *Waffenfarbe* as used by the Army. Thus *Gebirgstruppen* had light green, Panzer units pink, the Gendarmerie orange etc.





Ante Pavelic, leader of the Independent State of Croatia, and of the Ustase. (O. Spronk.)

them armoured) plus three independent regiments. The 12th Army contained some of the most vaunted of Germany's fighting formations.

The Yugoslavs were still reeling from this blow when, on 9 April, the German Second Army with ten divisions struck south from bases in Hungary. On 11 April the Italians entered the fray, crossing into Slovenia with 14 divisions of General Ambrosia's Second Army. On the same day Hungary threw its weight against an already crumbling Yugoslavia. On the evening of 12 April a small assault group under Hauptsturmführer Fritz Klingenberg of the SS 'Das Reich' Division raced ahead of the main body of troops bearing down on Belgrade and by a combination of daring and effrontery persuaded the mayor to surrender the city (the government having fled the capital on the first day of the invasion).

On 10 April, while the fighting was still in progress, the creation of an Independent State of Croatia was announced. Pavelic returned from Italy with a band of his Ustase garbed in Italian uniform. He asked Hitler to recognise Croatia and confirm him as its *Poglavnik* (Leader). On 15 April Hitler graciously granted both

requests. The Independent State of Croatia also embraced the ethnically mixed province of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Serbia was reduced to its pre-1912 size and placed under a German Military Governor. The Kosovo region was given to Albania, Macedonia ('South Serbia') to Bulgaria, while tiny Montenegro was declared a restored kingdom under Italian patronage (no one rash enough to accept its throne was ever found!). Slovenia was partitioned between the Germans and the Italians. Former Yugoslavia was now split down the middle (from north to south) into two 'Zones of Influence' — German to the east, Italian to the west. In reality Zones of Occupation.

The conquest of Yugoslavia had taken a mere eight days. Its collapse had been total. Only a small group, including the still under-age King, had escaped to freedom. By the end of May German troops began to pull out (the invasion of the Soviet Union now only weeks away) leaving behind in the whole of their Zone only four infantry divisions (704, 714, 717 and 718, all recently formed) plus two low grade 'garrison' divisions and a miscellany of police units.

Although some 350,000

Yugoslav soldiers had passed into German captivity at the end of the campaign, this represented less than half the number who had been mobilised at its beginning. Many units simply 'melted' into the countryside. Groups of uncaptured men and caches of undiscovered arms littered the land: the raw material for insurrection. It required only a leader of character to mould these into an effective fighting resistance.

At first it seemed, to the Western allies at least, that such a leader had been found in the person of Colonel Dragoljub ('Draza') Mihailovic, a Serb career officer of no particular distinction who had established a resistance movement known as the Chetniks (properly *cetniks*), a term honoured in Serb history. It had been the Chetniks who had, during all the long years of Ottoman rule in their homeland, kept alive armed resistance. But there was another leader whose name would soon rival, and finally eclipse, that of Mihailovic. This was the veteran Communist Josip Broz, better known by his underground code-name of Tito.

In the beginning the two made some effort to co-operate, but a split became inevitable. Mihailovic, who had established radio contact with London and had himself proclaimed Leader of the Yugoslav Army in the Homeland, stood for the old Serb-dominated Yugoslavia. While 'Chetnik' might be a word venerated in Serbia, it was hated in all other parts of the former state where, in the inter-war years, the Chetniks had often acted as secret enforcers of Serb rule. By contrast, Tito, son of a Croat father and Slovene mother, looked towards a federated Yugoslavia, albeit under Communist control. His followers wore the red star and adopted the name Partisans after the Russian guerrillas who had harassed Napoleon's troops during his 1812 campaign.

Due to the small number and inferior quality of the German garrison forces (mainly men in the 30 to 40 age group, unfit for front-line deployment) the first armed uprising in Serbia proved remarkably successful. On 24 September 1941 the town of Uzice, which boasted its own arms factory, was seized by a combined Chetnik/Partisan force. News of its capture enraged Hitler. Resistance was to be mercilessly crushed. Fifty to a hundred hostages were to be shot for every German killed. On 20 October German troops

furnished the people of Serbia with a chilling example of just what this order meant. Two days previously in another Chetnik/Partisan action, ten German soldiers had been killed and a further 26 wounded. In reprisal, in the town of Kragujevac, the Germans shot 2,300 persons (this was the official German figure, some eyewitnesses claimed it was much higher). The Serb Premier, Milan Nedic, was summoned to Hitler who screamed at him, 'Not only will the rate of 100 Serb deaths to every one German be maintained, it could easily be stepped up to 1,000 to one'. For good measure he told the petrified Nedic that if the rebellion did not cease *forthwith* he might order the extermination of the entire Serb people: no idle threat coming from a man of Hitler's temperament. This awesome warning produced the desired effect. On his return to Serbia, Nedic broadcast an appeal to his fellow countrymen to cease challenging the night of Germany. He begged them to lay down their arms. To Mihailovic the Kragujevac holocaust confirmed his worst fears. He instructed his subordinates to obey the government's injunction to stop fighting.

The two resistance leaders drew opposite conclusions from this event. To Mihailovic it appeared that armed resistance was suicidal until such time as it could be co-ordinated with an Allied landing in Yugoslavia (an eventuality which he regarded as neither problematic nor remote). Tito, on the other hand, argued that although resistance breeds reprisals, those reprisals in turn, generate further resistance. A spiral of terror and counter-terror results until the occupying power is faced with the opposition of the entire nation.

When the Partisans of Montenegro rose against their Italian 'patrons' and declared the country a Soviet Republic, the local Chetniks actually assisted the occupying power in suppressing the revolt. It was the first example of Chetnik 'accommodation' with the enemy. It was not to be the last. The fact that Tito was a communist combined with his refusal to desist from armed resistance with all the consequent hostage-killing this engendered, determined Mihailovic that his number one enemy was not the occupiers of his homeland but the Partisans. He resolved to drive Tito and his 'red' followers from the soil of Serbia. The Partisans were

forced out and withdrew to Bosnia where resistance had already flared. During the years of Turkish occupation many Serbs had fled north to settle in Croatia. That Serb minority now experienced the full fury of Ustase revenge. (At this point it has to be stressed that while the Chetniks were 100% Serb, the majority of the Partisans were also Serbs. It was only later in the war that Croats in significant numbers began to join Tito.) The Serb Partisans were obliged to come to the aid of their fellow Serbs, now victims of unrestrained Croat Ustase terror. Unrest and disaffection spread throughout the state; nowhere more so than in Bosnia-Herzegovina with its mixed population. Here Moslem Ustase units practiced what today we term 'ethnic cleansing' on a merciless scale. An unruly Croatia was not to Hitler's liking. If Pavelic was unable, or unwilling, to control his disorderly Ustase, German authority would have to be imposed.

Although Croatia included some 150,000 *Volksdeutsche* (persons of German descent), Nazi activity there, pre-war, had been muted. Hitler's wish was that the Balkans remain quiescent. Even after the outbreak of war in 1939 recruitment by the Waffen-SS of *Volksdeutsche* males in Yugoslavia had been kept deliberately unobtrusive. Some young lads had been discreetly spirited away to join the *Leibstandarte 'Adolf Hitler'* (they returned when the LAH invaded their former home in April '41). However, once Hitler had determined that Yugoslavia be destroyed, the SS began to establish its own *getarnte SS Standarten* (clandestine SS regiments) within Croatia and urged *Volksdeutsche* males to evade Yugoslav military service, and, if possible, sabotage it. After the creation of the 'Independent' State of Croatia, the *Volksdeutsche* were granted special 'Racial Group' status within it.

A *Volksdeutsche* equivalent of the SA, the *Deutsche Mannschaft*, had been in existence for some months prior to the war. From its ranks, in July 1941, the SS selected the fittest and most dedicated to create an élite formation known as the *Einsatzstaffel* (literally 'Action Squadron'). This was, originally, intended to be, like the *Allgemeine SS* in Germany, a part-time volunteer body, but in November of the same year a regular full-time sub-forma-

tion, the *Verfügungs-bataillon* (roughly 'Ever-ready Battalion') was formed from among its personnel. It was given the name 'Prinz Eugen'.

Himmler was ever anxious to increase the size of the Waffen-SS, but Hitler had promised the army that no further expansion would be permitted. Now the unsettled state of affairs in Croatia furnished the Reichsführer-SS with a pretext for requesting that a new SS division be raised to deal with the problem. This would, he suggested, be an aid to, not a rival of, the army since it would be used only against the local resistance, thereby releasing army units for more active duty. Hitler appears to have been convinced for on 30 December 1941 permission for such a new division was granted. Originally (March 1942) styled simply Volunteer Mountain Division (*Freiwilligen-Gebirgs Division*), it was, the following month, re-named SS Volunteer Division 'Prinz Eugen' in honour of Austria's greatest soldier (and ally of the Duke of Marlborough), Prince Eugene of Savoy, who, in the 18th century, had driven the Turks out of Croatia.

Recruitment was based in the Banat — that region of Croatia which borders on Rumania, Hungary and Serbia. Volunteers were called for from among the *Volksdeutsche* communities in these areas. The response was rather less than overwhelming. So poor, indeed, that a degree of compulsion, both legal and moral, had to be applied. The *Verfügungs-bataillon*, for example, was simply incorporated

willy-nilly into the division which bore its name. Since the vast majority of the 'volunteers' had been born outside the bounds of the Reich, officers and senior NCOs from existing Waffen-SS divisions had to be drafted in to form a leadership cadre. Hitler Youth-trained and battle-hardened, they tended to look down on the *Kukruz* ('country hicks' or 'hay seeds') who were the volunteer recruits of the new division.

If raising personnel had been difficult, finding equipment for them proved even harder. The 'Prinz Eugen' was obliged to commandeer 9,000 rifles from the *Postschutz* (Postal Defence Service) and scavenge weapons from the arsenals of defeated foes (even from military museums!) The result was an unsatisfactory mixture of German rifles, Belgian anti-tank guns, French and Yugoslav artillery, Czech machine-pistols and Italian mortars.

The commander of the new division Artur Phleps, was himself a *Volksdeutsche*. Born on 29 November 1881 in Birnhälm in the Siebenbürgen (at that time part of the Austro-Hungarian empire) he had been a professional soldier all his life. He served first in the Austrian army. During the Great War as an infantry officer, he saw active service on the eastern front. Later, when his home region had been accorded to Rumania, he joined that country's army, entering it with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. By 1940 he had attained the rank of General but was forcibly 'retired' on account of his too

outspoken pro-German attitude. A highly decorated officer, he was sought out by Himmler who granted him a commission in the Waffen-SS in the rank of SS-Oberführer (Brigadier-General). He was then posted to the 'Wiking' Division where he took over command of its 'Westland' Regiment on the death, in action, of its commander.

The first active service duties that the new division carried out were fairly minor affairs against the Partisans in the autumn of 1942. Its experience of a major action was soon to follow.

Hitler left Pavelic in no doubt as to his profound dissatisfaction with the security situation in Croatia. He was informed that the German army would assume command of *all* the armed forces in Croatia, both Croat and German, and that a major offensive against all branches of the resistance would be mounted in the early months of 1943. This offensive, to be code-named *Weiss* (White), would be carried out in three phases. Previous actions, Hitler insisted, had not been carried through with sufficient determination. This time there must be no failure of will. The rebels must be crushed, shattered with no quarter given.

On 3 January 1943 a top level conference was held in Rome to finalise the preparations for *Weiss I*, due to be launched in 17 days time. It was attended by the German Commander-in-Chief, South East Command, General Alexander von Löhner; the Chief of the Italian General Staff, Ugo

Serbian Prime Minister Nedjc is received by Hitler and Ribbentrop at Rastenburg.







Men of the 'Prinz Eugen' Division labour up a Bosnian mountainside accompanied by their pack mules.

Cavallero; the Commander of the Italian Second Army, General Roatta; high ranking officers from the Croat army and, astonishingly, a representative of the Chetnik forces, Dobroslav Jevdjevic. The plan was to encircle the main Partisan army in the Bosnian highlands followed by a German thrust through the centre to cut the enemy in two. Each of the resultant pockets would then be squeezed out of existence in an ever tightening grip. Each Axis partner would contribute five divisions: the Germans the 714th, 717th, 369th (which was almost entirely Croat) and 187th Divisions of the army plus the 'Prinz Eugen'; the Italians the 'Re', 'Lombardia', 'Sassari', 'Murgia' and 'Taurinese' Divisions of their Second Army. Also taking part would be elements of three other Italian divisions plus three Ustase Brigades. The Chetniks would provide 20,000 men to be under the strategic, but not tactical, control of the Italian army. In all, this represented a force of some 140,000 men. Enemy strength was estimated at about 30,000.

The 'Prinz Eugen' at this stage comprised two *Gebirgsjäger* (Mountain Light Infantry) Regiments, supported by two cavalry squadrons, a mountain artillery regiment, a tank, and an anti-tank company in addition to signals, pioneer, reconnaissance and motorcycle subsidiary sections. It was fully up to strength with over 21,000 officers and men but had yet to fight as a single unified whole.

The real unknown factor, however, was the Chetnik force

which the Italians, much against Hitler's wishes, proposed to field. The Chetniks were ill-armed, ill-disciplined and without experience of a large-scale operation. They lacked not only heavy weapons and transport but even maps of the battle zone. But, for all that, they were extravagantly confident of their ability to defeat the Partisans.

Before launching of Weiss I General Lütters gave his men a sort of devil's absolution. No soldier, he told them, would be called to account for harsh treatment of civilians. The theatre of operations would, to borrow a grisly expression from the Vietnam War, be regarded as a 'free fire zone' in which a soldier could kill anyone suspected on what-so-ever grounds of being 'a hostile'. It was *carte blanche* for every sort of atrocity.

The attack got off to a bad start. None of the first day's objectives was achieved. Possessed of vastly superior intelligence (it required only one sympathizer in each village to warn of an impending enemy attack), the Partisans were frequently able to pre-empt a hostile move by a lightning strike of their own. The Axis timetable fell further and further behind. Encirclement was achieved but not the concomitant of splitting the Partisan force in two. Eventually the sheer weight of numbers on the Axis side began to tell. Bihac, Tito's headquarters in Croatia fell, on 29 January, to the 'Prinz Eugen' supported by the 717th and 369th Divisions. The German forces now began to push southwards while the Italians,

from their bases in Herzegovina, moved north in an attempt to crush Tito's army between the jaws of the Axis pincers. Completely encircled by the enemy, Tito had to decide where he could punch his way out. A chain, so the adage has it, is no stronger than its weakest link. There was little question that the weakest link was the Italian-Chetnik force to the south. Tito did not wait to be attacked. He struck first, dealing the 'Murgia' Division a shattering blow, killing about 15,000 of the enemy, but more importantly, capturing the division's arsenal of weapons including, incredibly, 16 tanks! But the victory had been purchased at the cost of a vastly increased burden of wounded. These could not be left behind. To have done so would have meant certain death for them as *franc tireurs*.

Of the 20,000 Chetniks which the Italians had promised, only 12,000 were actually brought into action. Their assault on the Partisan south flank was an abysmal failure. This fiasco appeared to reinforce the argument in favour of a break-out to the south. That is why Tito's next move surprised both friend and foe alike. He ordered the destruction of all bridges across the Neretva river — that is to say, the removal of all his own escape routes to the south. It was a daring move which deceived his opponents. German Intelligence reported on 4 March, 'The intention of the enemy is to break-out to the north'.

It is easier to incapacitate a bridge than to destroy it.

Inevitably much of the superstructure remains and upon this, with a measure of ingenuity and improvisation, a temporary causeway sufficient to allow the passage on foot of a file of men may be constructed. The railway bridge at Jablanica stood, a gaunt skeleton half immersed in the waters of the Neretva. The far bank of the river was held by the Chetniks. Only a small blockhouse guarded their end of the wrecked bridge. During the night of 6/7th March a tiny band of Partisans scrambled across the twisted girders and, in a surprise assault, captured the blockhouse, killing its Chetnik occupants. This opened the way for larger groups to cross. By the end of the following day a bridgehead of some eight kilometres in depth had been established. With both banks now secure, the task of getting the main body of the Partisan army across began. After 19 hours of non-stop work a makeshift span had been created out of telegraph poles lashed together by their own wires. Transit by foot or mule was now possible but not by motor vehicle, and certainly not by armour. The recent prize of Italian tanks had to be abandoned. By 14 March the entire Partisan army (some 20,000 plus 4,000 wounded) was safely across the Neretva and into Chetnik-held territory. The German offensive slackened and ground to a halt.

Faced with a Partisan invasion of their fiefdom, the Chetniks appealed to the Italians for help but received little apart from an air-drop of supplies which fell mainly into Partisan hands. Chetnik morale collapsed and they disintegrated before the Partisan onslaught. Some Chetnik units which had been brought to the Neretva under the misapprehension that it was the Germans that they were to fight, switched sides and joined Tito.

The main body of the Partisan army was now back in Serbia where it had first begun its campaign of armed insurrection, but before he had been forced out of Bosnia Tito had arranged to leave behind in hiding sizeable groups of armed men. Once German troops had been withdrawn (as they were obliged to be since most of the battle had been fought in the Italian Zone) these clandestine units were re-activated. Village after village, town after town, includ-

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ing with consummate irony Bihac, Tito's former headquarters, and the scene of the 'Prinz Eugen's' first victory, reverted to Partisan control.

The Germans claimed that in the course of the Weiss operation they had killed 11,915 Partisans, captured 2,506 and 'executed upon capture' (their own sinister phrase) a further 616. Their own losses were given as 630 dead, 1,472 wounded and 374 missing; a 'body count' of more than six to one in their favour. The Propaganda Ministry might claim it as a victory. No one at the High Command of the Army entertained such an illusion; however, it was felt that the Partisans had sustained such heavy losses that possibly just one more 'big push' would be sufficient to finish them off. Thus, two months later, on 15 May 1943 a second major offensive was mounted. This, the sequel to Weiss (White) was named, without startling originality, Schwarz (Black). It was the last enterprise in which the Italians were to participate.

The Germans again deployed the 'Prinz Eugen', the Croatian 369th Division and the 704th, 718th and 719th Divisions (now re-designated the 104th, 118th and 119th Jäger Divisions). For the first time a fully experienced combat division was withdrawn from the fighting front in Russia to take part in this joint operation. This was the battle-hardened 1st Mountain Division of the army. To this force was added the 4th Regiment of the Brandenburg Division. The Bulgarians contributed two low-grade infantry divisions, but stipulated that they should be used only in a supporting role. This combined Axis force amounted to some 117,000 men, more than nine times the number at Tito's disposal.

The new offensive took Tito by surprise. He had not expected that his enemies would so soon resume operations. Learning from the mistakes of Weiss, the German now employed more flexible tactics — lighter and more mobile battle-groups unencumbered with the full baggage-train of a division in transit. The tactics might have varied, but the strategy remained the same, namely to cast a noose around the Partisan army and draw it ever tighter until it was strangled. The Partisans were surrounded on the banks of the Sutjeska River which, in order to escape, they were obliged to cross, tak-

ing with them a burden of some 6,000 wounded. During the course of this action Tito himself was wounded but was still able to direct operations. The bulk of the Partisan army succeeded in crossing the river despite constant air and artillery bombardment. Tito now headed north to Bosnia where he was faced only by a dispirited 369th Division and the ineffectual Croat Home Army. In the course of the battle more than 7,000 Partisans were killed, but the hoped-for knock-out blow was not achieved. To win, the guerrilla has only to survive. Like Weiss before it, Schwarz had to be counted a failure.

Defeat breeds recrimination. Perhaps rather unfairly the Germans laid much of the blame on Pavelic. The German Commander-in-Chief, South East, General Löhr recommended to Hitler that the *Poglavnik* be removed and replaced, as in Serbia, by a German Military Governor. Hitler did not take up this suggestion, preferring to subvert Pavelic's authority from within. He authorised Himmler to raise a second Waffen-SS division this time taking, if necessary, men from Pavelic's own forces (the Ustase and Home Army).

Against fierce opposition from Pavelic, who did everything within his power to obstruct it, the 13th SS Volunteer Mountain division (later known as the 'Handschar') was formed with a strength of 21,000 men, the greatest bulk of whom were from the Moslem region of Croatia. Himmler seems to have believed that Islam, unlike Christianity, encourages the martial spirit; also that the Moslem Croats could be counted on to deal ruthlessly with their traditional Serb enemies.

In July 1943 Mussolini was ousted from power. In their Zone of Yugoslavia the Italians now began to disarm the Chetniks, aware of the danger that they might turn their weapons upon their former protectors. On 8 September Italy quit the war. A desperate struggle for Italian arms and supplies ensued. Most Italians wanted only to have an end to fighting; some went over to the Partisans, others offered their services to the Germans (to the SS in the case of the most dedicated, or compromised, fascists). Only a small number refused either to surrender or switch sides. Among these was the 'Bergamo' Division on the offshore island of Split. **MI**

To be continued



**John Tzimiskes**  
mid-10th Century AD

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